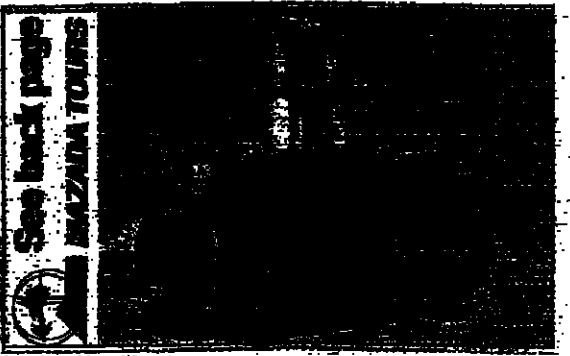
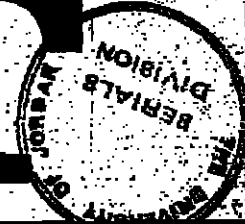


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Thousands flock to Western Wall

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Liam Neeson is 'Michael Collins'

Time Out

Sharansky's Russian reunion

The Magazine

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34 of the fallen buried on day of mourning

By LIAT COLLINS

The country became one grieving family yesterday, united in a day of national mourning for the 73 soldiers who died in Tuesday's helicopter disaster. Thirty-four of the fallen were buried yesterday. The magnitude of the tragedy

Jlem high school mourns two more graduates, Page 2

Inquiry focuses on human error, Page 3

sent shock waves across the country, as ripples of private grief of the bereaved families and friends affected people everywhere. Israel Radio broadcast parts of each of the funerals, emphasizing that each soldier was a person and a world of his own.

The official day of mourning commenced at 3 p.m. Wednesday with the first funeral, and continued until 7 last night. Twenty-five of the soldiers were buried on Wednesday; 13 funerals are scheduled for today.

The names of the last of the victims still awaiting identification were released yesterday: St.-Sgt. Maj. Aviv Golan, 24, of Moshav Beit Yosef; St.-Sgt. Maj. Bashir Hussein, 34, of Zarzir; St.-Sgt. Shai Itamar, 20, of Jerusalem; and Sgt. Ya'acov Melamed, 20, of Petah Tikva.

Festivities were canceled, all places of entertainment were closed, and flags flew at half mast. Many people lit memorial candles and put black ribbons in windows, at the suggestion of the chief rabbis, who led special prayers in the afternoon at the Western Wall.

Radio and television broadcasts maintained the somber tone that began as soon as the size of the catastrophe became known. The Histadrut announced it was suspending all industrial action for



Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu grieves at the funeral of St.-Sgt. Yonatan Amedi, who was laid to rest at Mt. Herzl Military Cemetery yesterday. Amedi was named after Netanyahu's brother, who was killed in the Entebbe raid in 1976. (Aviel Jeruzalimski)

the day and Egged carried soldiers free of charge. IAF aircraft, except those on operational duty, remained on the ground in tribute to fallen comrades.

All state schools held memorial assemblies at the start of the day. Media attention focused on the Galili High School in Kfar Sava, which lost three graduates in the collision; the Alliance School in Ramat Aviv, which also lost three former pupils; and Jerusalem's Rene Cassin High School, which lost two more graduates in the crash, bringing to 26 the number lost in terror attacks or during their military service.

"Today is a day of mourning for the whole people of Israel, which lost the best of its sons in the helicopter disaster," wrote Education

Minister Ze'evulun Hammer in an announcement sent to all schools. "The State of Israel lowers its flags on the fresh graves of 73 of its fighters, who fell as one guarding its safety and security."

Each funeral was attended by at least one MK or minister. President Ezer Weizman, who promised to meet every bereaved family, began the first of 73 condolence calls yesterday morning in Kfar Yona, at the home of Sgt.-Maj. Saguy Arazi, 22.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu attended the funeral in Jerusalem of St.-Sgt. Yonatan Amedi, 20, named after the premier's brother who was killed in the 1976 Entebbe rescue the week

Continued on Page 2

Yonatan Amedi dies 20 years after his namesake

By HERB KEINON

When Rina Amedi was pregnant in July 1976, the IDF carried out its raid on Entebbe. Amedi and her husband decided that if the baby was a boy, they would name him after Yonatan Netanyahu, the commando killed in the operation.

Yesterday, Yonatan Netanyahu's brother, the prime minister, eulogized Yonatan Amedi, who was killed in Tuesday night's helicopter crash.

St.-Sgt. Amedi, 20, was from Ma'aleh Adumim. He was buried in Jerusalem's Mt. Herzl Military Cemetery.

"His name was Yoni, Yonatan," Netanyahu said. "His parents named him after my brother, who was killed defending our land. Both of

them are buried on this mountain, in the Holy Land, in the Holy City. Both of them fulfilled their obligations. Both of them served the country, both of them gave their lives."

All that remains, Netanyahu said, "is to cry for them, and think of the things they could have done in their lives, the pride they could have brought their parents and their families..."

"Gedalia," Netanyahu said, addressing Amedi's father, "we will not forget Yonatan. In his name we will try harder, in his name we will do everything to bring real peace to our land."

Thousands of people thronged into the cemetery for the funeral. They stood, many of them sobbing in the arms of friends, in rows after row of the flower-bedded tomb-

stones of other soldiers.

Even as friends and relatives stayed after the funeral to pass by the fresh grave, and as the brown-bested Golani soldiers who served as Amedi's honor guard dispersed, another honor guard, this one made up of green-bested Nahal soldiers, gathered in the parking lot to await the funeral of St.-Sgt. Omer Shalit.

Gedalia Amedi, who owns a candy store in the Mahane Yehuda market, wrote a letter to Netanyahu after the helicopter crash, explaining that his son was named after Yoni Netanyahu, and that "if your schedule allows it, we would like to see you pay final respects to our son."

Amedi is survived by his parents, two sisters and a brother.

Prisoners of Zion living in poverty

By BATSHEVA TSUR

Dozens of former Prisoners of Zion and aliyah activists - including Ida Nudel, Vladimir Slepak

and Yosef Begun - are subsisting on meager publicly funded allowances. *The Jerusalem Post* has learned.

The government is opposing - on budgetary grounds - a draft bill to grant regulated pensions to former Prisoners of Zion and other activists.

Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein confirmed last night that an unspecified number of former prisoners are facing economic hardship. They include former Prisoners of Zion from Iraq, Ethiopia, Romania and North Africa, he said.

"They are entitled to special status for their [underground] activities. It is their right - even if they are not invalids - and they should not have to beg," he said.

The National Insurance Institute pays a pension only to former prisoners who become ill.

Edelstein said the Treasury and the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry were opposing the draft bill - presented to the last Knesset by MK Emanuel Zissman - because of budgetary difficulties.

"This is a small number of people for whom a few hundred extra shekels will make a big difference

every month," he said.

The Knesset is due to vote on Monday on whether the draft, approved in its first reading by the previous Knesset, can be carried over to the present house.

"This situation is a disgrace to our people and to Jewish tradition, which always cared for those in need," said Nudel, who was a refusenik for 16 years, four of them spent in prison. "No one is without bread or a roof over their heads. But we have created a cynical establishment. They are abusing us. We were called heroes and now have become useless old people. I don't believe the Knesset will take money from its pocket and give it to [the prisoners]."

"People who spent years in prison are too proud to put out their hands now for money," she said.

No one saved money for the prisoners during their long years of struggle, she added, and most of them were too old to begin working when they finally arrived in Israel.

As a single woman over 60, Nudel receives NIS 782 from the

Continued on Page 2

Netanyahu to meet Arafat at Erez on Sunday

By DAVID MAKOVSKY and JON IMMANUEL

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's trip to the Netherlands next week has been postponed by one day and abridged due to the helicopter tragedy.

Netanyahu and Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok agreed during a phone conversation yesterday that they would meet in Amsterdam on Wednesday, when the prime minister stops over en route to Washington.

According to a statement issued by Netanyahu's office, Kok understood the need to shorten the visit and he expressed condolences to Israel over the tragedy.

The Netherlands currently holds the six-month rotating leadership of the European Union.

Netanyahu's meeting with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, originally scheduled for yesterday but postponed due to the

Continued on Page 6

TO OUR READERS

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Haifa	4:51 p.m.	5:56 p.m.
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Jerusalem 1997

Cause of 'copter collision may never be known

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN and agencies

With no in-flight recordings and no survivors, investigators may never fully determine what caused Tuesday night's mid-air crash of two transport helicopters in which all 73 soldiers and aircrew died, analysts said yesterday.

Security sources said an inquiry commission appointed by Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai is focusing on human error as the main factor in the worst air disaster in the country's military history.

The sources said the Sikorsky CH-53 helicopters were circling in close formation along the northern border, waiting for permission to cross

into Lebanon, when they collided minutes after takeoff.

Investigators think the rotor of the rear helicopter hit the tail of the lead helicopter, the sources said. One helicopter plunged straight down, while the other spiraled to the ground.

IAF helicopters douse their lights when they enter Lebanon, but it was not clear whether the pilots had done so yet, security sources said.

"If the suspicion is that human error caused the crash and there's no one to question, it becomes very difficult to reach solid conclusions and recommendations," said Yisrael Yehalom, a former Sikorsky pilot who investigated the previous worst air disaster, in 1977, when a CH-53 crashed in the

Jordan Valley, killing 54.

Channel 1 quoted an unnamed pilot in the Sikorsky squadron as saying the rear helicopter "simply ran over" the leading copter.

Military correspondent Alon Ben-David said, "The only explanation at present is an error on the pilot's part, an error in estimating the distance between the two helicopters, which caused him to approach and to hit the helicopter in front of him."

There was no flight recorder, often known as a "black box."

Mordechai reiterated yesterday that the air force is obligated to adopt any recommendations made by the commission of inquiry. He also advised against making hasty judgments.

"Everything that will be demanded of us as a

result of the recommendations of the commission of inquiry will be adopted and implemented," Mordechai said in an interview with Israel Radio.

"The commission has only just begun. I advise all of us to be patient and not to take any shortcuts. It is important that the process be orderly and based on facts, and not something which is out to satisfy short-term public needs," Mordechai said.

The external commission - appointed outside the air force to ensure against a possible whitewash - is expected to submit its interim results sometime next week. A final report is to be submitted within 45 days.

The commission met in Tel Aviv yesterday and heard testimony from air force personnel and experts on the CH-53 helicopter.

Preliminary inspection of the wreckage found that the second helicopter hit the tail of the first, IDF Spokesman Brig-Gen. Oded Ben-Ami said that so far the cause of the collision is not clear.

Nevertheless, evidence seemed to point to human error, Mordechai said there were no restrictions due to the weather and there was nothing to show that it was a result of a mechanical malfunction.

"The mission of the inquiry is not easy. It's very complicated," Mordechai said, urging the media and the public to refrain from speculating how the collision occurred.

"I ask for a display of responsibility and not to go on about all sorts of speculation based on unsubstantiated information," Mordechai said.

Beit Jann buries its 52nd soldier

By DAVID RUDGE

In bitter cold and with snow and ice still lining the streets, thousands of residents of Beit Jann gathered in the village yesterday to pay their last respects to Sgt. Fadi Kazamel, 19, one of the victims of the helicopter disaster.

Kazamel was the 52nd person from the Druze village on the slopes of Mt. Meron, which today has a population of around 6,000 people, to be killed while serving in the security forces, since the establishment of the state.

The village has lost more of its sons in relation to the size of its population than any other community in the country, yet it did not have a military cemetery until three years ago.

Yesterday Kazamel, from a close-knit family of eight, was laid to rest there.

"He was kind and quiet and everybody who knew him, loved him," said Mohammed Kazamel, a brother-in-law and a relative.

"He liked karate and the army and, from what I understand, he was planning to get married at the end of the year," said Mohammed.

The Kazamel family is well known in Beit Jann and in the region generally. Fadi, according to Mohammed, was the third member of the family to be killed while serving in the security forces.

"One was killed while on army service, another in one of the disasters in Tyre in 1983, if I remember correctly, and now Fadi," said Mohammed.

Mohammed himself also served in the IDF, in the Artillery Corps,

along with virtually all of the men in the village.

"I hope that this will be the last tragedy, not just for the Kazamel family or for Beit Jann, but for the IDF and the whole State of Israel," said Mohammed.

Despite the relative isolation of the hilltop village, which has only one access road, and bitter disputes with the Nature Reserves Authority over land rights in the Mt. Meron nature preserve, residents of Beit Jann see themselves as being an integral part of the state.

"We have paid in the past and again now a bitter, painful and heavy price but, perhaps actually because of this, we are an integral part of the state," said local council chairman Yusef Kaban.

Foreign Minister David Levy, OC Northern Command Maj-Gen. Amiram Levine, Deputy Education Minister Moshe Peled and Knesset Interior Committee chairman Salah Tarif were among the thousands of people at the funeral yesterday.

"I came here as a representative of the government to cry with you and bow my head in front of the coffin of the young fighter, just 19 years old," said David Levy, his voice choking with emotion.

"We will never know what happened in those seconds prior to the crash. We will never know because not even one survived to tell what happened, what they said in those same seconds."

"I have been in this village already. I have been through many disasters and as a believer I have a prayer, Shalom Shalom, let us not know any more disasters and let us know peace and love."

supreme effort of the helicopter pilots, the air crews, the Nahal, Golani and armored troops, night after night, day by day in the deep Lebanese mud for the past 15 years. The battle is not over. The 73 soldiers fell in the line of duty, in battle...The families will remain with the pain of loss which is inescapable and has no cure," Peres said.

The meeting opened with a minute's silence.

Then Shai David, a member of Labor's Young Guard, read Haim Guri's poem "Here lie our dead."

Faction chairman MK Ra'anan Cohen sent Labor's condolences to the bereaved families, adding "at this awful moment we want to embrace the mourning families and tell them we are with you. On this day we must send encouragement and support to IDF soldiers wherever they are, soldiers who are protecting our safety day and night, and pay with their blood to ensure our future."

Cohen said the northern front was becoming crueler every day "but our message must be sharp and clear. We shall not retreat or abandon our positions, and shall continue in our fight as long as peace and security are not ensured for the residents of the North and the entire state."

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Peres: We are one family

By MICHAL YUDELMAN

"We are all one family," Labor Chairman Shimon Peres said yesterday, in a memorial session held by the party's executive and Knesset faction at Labor's Tel Aviv headquarters.

"We have undergone two days of tears and pain, and the mourning is unprecedented, both in its magnitude and intensity. But in these days the Israeli nation has emerged in all its greatness and strength," Peres said. "These were two days not only of tears, but of solidarity between the nation and its homeland. We are one real family, beyond all the arguments, we have true unity in protecting our land and a true desire for peace."

"Pain does not distinguish between government and opposition," Peres added, noting "the war for Israel's safety and the devotion of its youth provide us with hope and security. In that we are all united."

He spoke of the "heart-rending weeping and cries of the bereaved parents and children, but there was also greatness in their support and faith in the IDF. I don't remember such profound expression of young people to the army, and of parents to their sons."

"It is hard to describe in words the

supreme effort of the helicopter pilots, the air crews, the Nahal, Golani and armored troops, night after night, day by day in the deep Lebanese mud for the past 15 years. The battle is not over. The 73 soldiers fell in the line of duty, in battle...The families will remain with the pain of loss which is inescapable and has no cure," Peres said.

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Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert observes a minute's silence for the fallen sons of municipal employees. (Brian Hentler)

Stubborn officer saved soldier from crash

A soldier escaped death in the helicopter crash because a stubborn officer enforcing passenger limits forced him off just before takeoff, his family said yesterday.

"I wanted to tell the story of what was in fact a miracle," the soldier's uncle, Nissim Dana, said in a call to Army Radio.

The nephew Raz Albahari, 20, boarded one of the two Sikorsky CH-53 transporters but was forced off along with a friend because of army regulations limiting the number who could fly.

The two were told they would go next week.

"At the last second they took him off," Dana said, describing a tug-of-war between two officers over what to do with Albahari. Both

officers died in the crash.

"One of the officers said he had to have him at the post because he is a professional guy, an ordnance expert, and the second officer, the senior commander, simply disagreed. Under no circumstance was he prepared to let him board," Dana said.

Albahari, who has served 11 months in Lebanon and was due to spend up to two weeks on duty in the security zone, left on the helicopter a bag of sweets and milk and other items for a friend at the front.

He called his mother to say he was coming home.

It was close to 7 p.m., about the

time of the crash. The mother Malka Albahari, 42, told Reuters her son caught a bus and arrived at his home in northern Israel at 8:30 p.m.

News of the crash was first broadcast on television at 9 p.m.

"Then he put it together these were his friends. All of them were killed," she said.

Albahari, who received psychological and medical treatment at a hospital, raced from funeral to funeral on Wednesday and yesterday, his mother said. The IDF Spokesman barred him from speaking to reporters.

"I got my son as a gift," she said. "It's the hand of God." (Reuters)

NEWS in brief

Virtual memorials to 73 soldiers
Several Internet sites have been created as memorials to the 73 soldiers killed in Tuesday's helicopter accident. Information on the disaster and a condolence book can be found at www.iconet.net. A chatroom on the disaster and condolence book also can be accessed at www.netvision.net or www.netking.com. The sites recorded over 3,000 hits in their first 12 hours. *Jerusalem Post Staff*

Rabbi Schach released from hospital
Rabbi Eliezer Menahem Schach was discharged in good condition from Tel Aviv's Ichilov Hospital yesterday, after nearly five days of treatment for serious respiratory difficulties. The 99-year-old rabbi, the spiritual leader of Lithuanian haredim, had been attached to a respirator and a feeding tube and treated with antibiotics and steroids. He is now breathing on his own and will not have to return for a checkup at the hospital, according to Ichilov officials. *Judy Siegel*

Immigration down in first half of 1996
Some 33,000 new immigrants arrived in Israel in the first half of 1996, a 4.4% drop compared with the same period in 1995, the Central Bureau of Statistics announced yesterday. The number of the immigrants arriving from the former Soviet Union, 27,900, dropped 6.5% from 29,800. From the Americas and Oceania, 2,100 immigrants arrived during the reported period, compared with 1,700, an increase of 24%. Most of that increase was from South America, with 1,100 arriving compared with 700. *Itim*

More survivors to be eligible for pensions
Holocaust survivors who previously received one-time payments from Germany may now be eligible for pensions, according to the latest agreement between Bonn and the Claims Conference. Monthly pensions of DM 500 will be available to survivors who already received one-time compensation of more than DM 10,000. These survivors previously had been excluded by German guidelines from the so-called Article 2 pension program, which was created as part of the German reunification treaty. The largest group of survivors still excluded from compensation are those in eastern Europe, although negotiations are continuing to expand the eligibility criteria. Applications are available from the Claims Conference, POB 74, Tel Aviv. *Marilyn Henry*

Arab youth wounded after attacking policeman
A border policeman shot and lightly injured an Arab youth who fought with him in Jerusalem's Old City, a police official said. "Near the Damascus Gate, a Border Police force arrested an Arab youth for throwing stones at an Egged bus," police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby said. "The Arab, under arrest, attacked a policeman, who fired at him and hit him in the leg." *Reuters*

'Post' invites writings about crash
Children around the country have been writing stories and poems expressing their feelings following Tuesday's helicopter collision, which claimed the lives of 73 soldiers. The *Jerusalem Post* invites parents, teachers and children to send copies of poems that express the grief, sense of loss and other emotions following the collision. Selected poems will be published in Tuesday's paper, one week after the fatal crash at She'ar Yashuv. Fax poems to: 02-537-6553, or deliver them to The Jerusalem Post building, Yirmiyahu Street, Romema, by Monday at 12 noon.

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Learning from tragedy

Today is Israel's third day of funerals. The first day, the day after 73 soldiers died in the crash of two transport helicopters, was the day of shock. Yesterday, the enormity of the tragedy began to sink in, as the stark number 73 was made human by seeing the pictures of dozens of fresh young faces, reading the stories of their lives, and hearing the awful drumbeat of announcements of their funerals.

Today the people of Israel remain unified in their sorrow. The problems of daily life are still pale in light of the collapse of so many worlds. The nation shrinks into itself, into a small town where everyone knows someone who was touched by the tragedy, and is sickened by it themselves.

No nation knows how to pull together in the face of tragedy as Israel does. That skill, unfortunately born of experience, will serve us well in overcoming this calamity.

For the families of the fallen, life will never be quite the same. Next week, though, life will begin to return to normal for most of the country.

In the past, after tragic accidents, "normal" has meant a flurry of public recriminations and attempts to hold someone accountable. President Ezer Weizman alluded to this tendency in remarks just hours after the crash: "I appeal to the public: Let's make it a national, mature, and responsible time of anguish and grief... please don't jump to conclusions." In a smart and appropriate move to preempt second-guessing of an internal IDF investigation, the government immediately appointed an independent commission, led by former Defense Ministry director-general and air force commander David Ivry.

Perhaps the need for an independent commission to investigate the worst military accident in Israel's history is a natural one. Still it is unfortunate that the public's willingness to trust military investigations seems to be deteriorating. Last October, for the first time, and after a court order demanded by bereaved parents, the IDF agreed to an external investigation of a training accident. The parents wanted the independent committee to have the authority to recommend a range of sanctions, including criminal, against military personnel who may have caused their sons' deaths.

However, the trend toward public investigations of military incidents could be a dangerous one. The most important function of a military investigation should not be to assess blame, as in court of law, but to derive lessons for the

future. The IDF has an admirable tradition in this regard, as a result of which the number of training accidents has dropped over the years. Scores of military regulations can be traced directly to lessons learned from accidents - if anything there are some who argue that the quest for safety has led to overregulation.

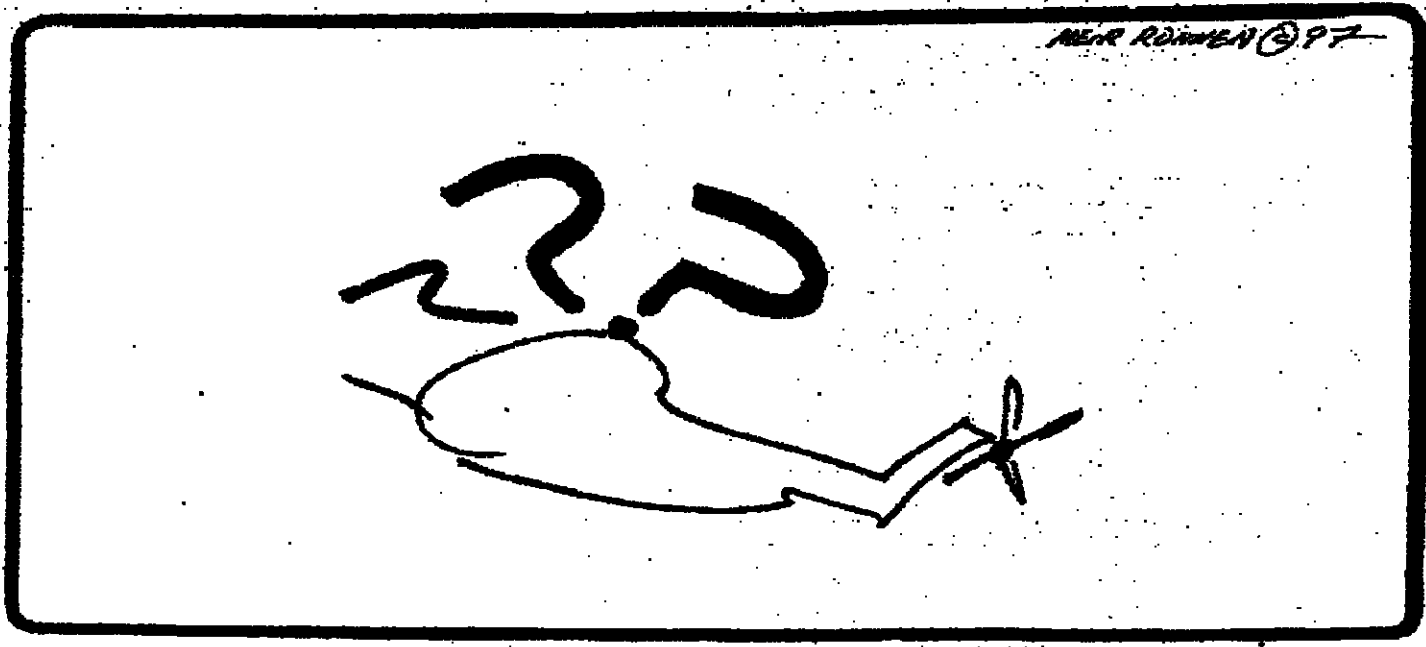
Many have pointed out the irony that the soldiers who died were being flown to Lebanon as a safety measure, to avoid exposing them to roadside bombs. Since the accident, the IDF has reaffirmed that the reasons for flying soldiers to the North remain valid, and that this practice will be continued.

The process of any institution investigating itself is a delicate one. On the one hand, moves to increase the independence of the investigating bodies could reduce the likelihood of the results getting swept under the table. On the other hand, even now when the investigations are internal, there is a strong tendency to find someone who should "pay" for any accident.

In the case of Tuesday's catastrophic helicopter collision, it is natural for the public to want to know the cause of the crash, and if there is anything that can reasonably be done to prevent a similar accident in the future. On a very preliminary and unofficial basis, the causes of bad weather and technical malfunction have been ruled out, leaving the suspected cause to be human error. Even if it was a human error that caused the crash, it does not mean that there was negligence, or that one more rule or regulation would have prevented the tragedy. No mechanical system, and no human, is perfect.

Most of us are lucky enough not to be in situations on a daily basis in which a mistake can be deadly, to oneself and to many others. Those who subject themselves to danger, who take on the responsibility for the lives of others, and for whom the weight of that responsibility lies heavily on their conscience, deserve our gratitude. Even the most informed investigator may not be in a position to fully judge what happened, let alone the rest of us who are sitting at home and speculating from our armchairs.

The objective of the Ivry Commission will be to discover, as best as it can, what happened. Even more important, it will attempt to discover whatever lessons can be learned for the future. But the public should keep in mind that the magnitude of the tragedy does not mean that there will be a lesson for the future, except that tragedy is a part of life that cannot be entirely eliminated.



Only the naive would believe

Syrian Vice President Abdel Khalim Khaddam has declared that if Israel withdraws from the security zone in south Lebanon it will gain calm on its border with Lebanon.

But he and his Lebanese cronies can't fool us, especially not this week, of all weeks.

Still numb with sadness over the most grievous toll of IDF soldiers in a single incident since 1973, we are beginning to reclaim our sense of anger and rage against the regime that is perpetuating the perilous situation on our northern border.

We know well enough that for Hafez Assad the indirect war waged against Israel in south Lebanon is an indispensable factor in his bid to dictate terms to Israel regarding the future of the Golan Heights and a final peace settlement.

A ruthless leader and brutal mafia-style politician like Assad would never give up a bargaining chip of this kind as easily as Khaddam pretends he would.

Interviewed by the BBC following the recent killing of three Israeli soldiers by an explosive charge planted by Hizbullah terrorists in the zone, the Syrian ambassador to the US made it quite clear that his master would not, even temporarily, curb Hizbullah activity in south Lebanon unless Israel accepted Syrian terms for the renewal of peace talks; even if it did, he would not commit himself to more than an evasive "Then we'll see..."

This is exactly the kind of brutal linkage Assad has always cherished in his negotiations with Israel, and which Khaddam has

understandably failed to mention. It should be noted that Hizbullah spiritual leader Sheikh Fadlallah has already provided his followers with the rationale - or rather pretext - to enable them to keep on fighting Israel, even if Jerusalem concludes peace deals with Beirut and Damascus. Fadlallah has declared that "the fight against peace will be the fight against normalization with Israel."

Fadlallah has also made it clear

believe that, contrary to the popular saying, they really can fool all of the people all the time.

Note, for instance, their joining forces with the Iranians in supporting and training Hamas terrorists (like serial bomber Hassan Salameh) and Islamic Jihad terrorists just when Assad professed to be interested in advancing the US-sponsored peace talks with Israel at Wye Plantation last year.

Or note how one day they intensify their strategic alliance

To a mafia-style regime like Assad's it doesn't seem strange at all, on the one hand, to suspect Iran of being behind the recent terror attacks in Syria and against the Syrians in Lebanon, and on the other to allow the Iranians to transfer massive arms shipments to Hizbullah through Damascus airport.

It probably comes naturally to the Syrians to support terrorism against Turkey, concurrently claiming that relations between Syria and Turkey are "excellent," as Khaddam recently said (even "persuading" a certain wanted Turkish terrorist, not a member of the Syrian-backed PKK, to turn himself over to the Turkish embassy in Damascus).

Assad and his Lebanese cronies must be fools to think they can fool Israel

that "when the time comes" Hizbullah will have to fight Israel "anywhere in the world," which doesn't necessarily preclude northern Israel.

One of Hizbullah's leaders also recently confirmed his commitment to the Iranian-inspired goal of "liberating" Jerusalem by promising Hizbullah members and their allies in the Syrian- and Iranian-supported Islamic Jihad and Hamas that they would "pray" together in Jerusalem.

But even if Hizbullah did unexpectedly stop fighting Israel on its northern border in the event of a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the security zone, Assad would never be short of terrorists to attack Israel.

We must not overlook his long-time support for Palestinian terrorist groups like Ahmed Jibril's PFLP-GC and George Habash's PFLP.

ASSAD and his people probably

with Iran and support the Iranians, Hizbullah and Saudi Islamic militants in planning and carrying out bombing attacks on US targets in Saudi Arabia; while the next day (or to be accurate, a few months later) they join the six GCC states and Egypt in a joint and harshly-worded anti-Iranian and anti-fundamentalist declaration (to which the Iranians reacted by accusing Syria of stabbing allies in the back).

And note how last year the Syrians tried to intimidate Jordan through a terror campaign, then later on, after their involvement in terrorist activities in Jordan and Saudi Arabia was exposed and international pressure was brought to bear on them, they decided to offer Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and other states their cooperation in fighting terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism.

A regime like this can hardly expect to inspire total trust in the Israeli side, or expect Israel to withdraw its forces to no less than the June 4, 1967 border - thereby endangering Israel's security, not to mention its vital water resources.

Trust? Look at Assad's own family. There isn't even a minimum of trust there. The feuds, conspiracies and corruption recall similar struggles within Saddam Hussein's family and regime.

One of Assad's brothers, Jamil, has been exiled to France. Another, Rifat, is currently under house arrest. Rumors are circulating that both brothers are suspected of having plotted the assassination of Assad's son Bassel, officially reported to have died in a car accident in 1994.

The writer is a defense analyst.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WELL-MEANING POLLYANNAS

Sir, - From the fact that the Hebron agreement passed handily in the Knesset, Norma and Benjamin Marx (Letters, January 31) conclude that Prime Minister Netanyahu has made good on his pledge to heal the country's deep rifts. This is nothing more than an optical illusion, since it is equivalent to concluding that the Knesset reflected the majority will of the nation when it voted itself extravagant increases in salaries and perks. On the contrary, most of the Likud-Gesher MKs voted for the Hebron agreement in direct contradiction to the platform upon which they were elected to the Knesset. Others were forced to vote in favor in order to prevent the fall of the government and new elections. Those with vestiges of self-respect and integrity absented themselves from the vote.

Rather than a healing of the rifts, Netanyahu's political cynicism is reducing the credibility of the government and lessening the faith of the electorate in the democratic process. Hillel Halkin, now a reg-

ular columnist in *The Jerusalem Post*, wrote a penetrating analysis of the political situation in Israel shortly after the Rabin assassination (*Commentary* magazine, January 1996). In it, he notes that the Labor Party lied to the Israeli public in 1992 because its platform clearly and explicitly ruled out all of the things which it subsequently did; negotiations with the PLO and an agreement that would lead to a Palestinian state. Although it is accepted that politicians lie about ordinary matters of political expediency, "it is quite another to lie about momentous decisions that will profoundly affect the future of the country for as long as it continues to exist. If the questions of Israel's borders, of their location and defensibility, of who lives and rules on either side of them, and of their relationship to the claims of thousands of years of Jewish history is not something about which to consult the Israeli public within the framework of democratic politics, what is democracy for?"

Halkin argues that once Rabin changed his mind, it was his obligation to explain this to the citizens of Israel and to call for an election in order to obtain a mandate for this new policy. Whether or not such a mandate would have been given is impossible to say. The important thing is that the people would have had an opportunity to speak. Anything less than that called the legitimacy of the government's actions into question. Binyamin Netanyahu is rapidly approaching the situation in which Yitzhak Rabin found himself. That is, his government is legal, but its legitimacy in the eyes of the public that had voted for him is debatable. And, like Rabin, it appears he has lost personal credibility because he was not honest with the electorate. This, I am sorry to say, is the reality of the political scene today, and not the healing process seen by well-meaning Pollyannas.

JAY SHAPIRO

Girot Shomron.

THE KNESSET'S SELF-RESPECT

Sir, - Your article, "Knesset image-building" (January 30) makes it obvious that Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon is living in as much of a dream world as the other 119 members of our Knesset. The only way for our Knesset members to gain the respect of the Israeli electorate is to gain respect for themselves.

The following list is just the tip of the iceberg of the many ways the Knesset members must change in order to regain the public's respect (if they ever had it before):

1. Attend Knesset sessions. The public is sick of reading about the passage of laws, no matter how minor, by a vote of 14 to 6 or 22 to 8. No law should be brought to a house vote until there is a quorum of 90 members present.
2. Do not pass a drastic budget cut and then give yourself a 40 percent wage increase. With the

increase of the cost of medical services, the reduction of free schooling to our children (Israel's future), the repeal of discounts to our elderly (Israel's past), the increase of electricity prices (with the CEO there earning over NIS 60,000 a month) this is no time for our part-time lawmakers to give themselves any increase, let alone 40 percent.

3. Reduction of perks. The members of the Knesset should show willingness to tighten their own belt by reducing their staff and giving up their high-priced cars. They should not even think of building an office in their home or a better gym in the Knesset building at taxpayers' expense. The Knesset members do not need another excuse for staying off the Knesset floor and the money would be better used in building gyms in our public schools.
4. Review Knesset members'

pensions. When there is consideration of increasing the pension age, let the Knesset members lead the way by (a) increasing the number of years one has to serve before being eligible for a pension, and (b) reducing the amount of the pension to the same percentage of the last salary as applied to the average Israeli worker, plus similar age requirements.

5. Close all government offices in Tel Aviv. This will not only be a financial saving, but will strengthen our claim to Jerusalem, Israel's capital.
6. Stop supplying banquets at each Knesset committee meeting. The view of the food and drinks on the table at each meeting makes a hungry child's mouth water.

SEYMOUR BRODSKY

Jerusalem.

TV PROGRAMS

Sir, - My family and I love to watch the NBC cable channel. I like in particular the *National Geographic* program.

I was surprised that they wanted to stop showing that program in our area. I couldn't believe that they could do so. I learn a lot about different cultures from *National Geographic* and *Travel Express*. It

is an excellent channel and I love it more than any other TV channel.

KIRIL ULLMAN
(Age 11)
Ra'anana.

The shock of this week's tragedy on our northern border in which 73 of our young soldiers were killed in one horrible stroke has, as in the case of past calamities, brought out the best aspects of our national solidarity.

YOSEF GOELL

But even as our dead were being interred in cemeteries throughout the country, the disaster seemed inevitably to fan the flames of a debate which has been building up over the past few months over whether Israel should withdraw unilaterally from the security zone in south Lebanon.

Such a politicized society are we that many of us are finding it well-nigh impossible to respect even the short period of national mourning, to give the trauma time to wear off before piling into the debate.

Some adduce the argument that the collision of the two helicopters, on their way to reinforce two IDF outposts in the security zone, highlighted, as nothing else could, the futility of our continued presence in the zone. Others went back in history to 1968 and Vietnam, citing the effect of the Viet-Cong's Tet offensive on America's ultimate decision to withdraw its forces at any price.

Like most historical and political analogies, this one is also very mostly false. But two aspects that seem to ring true should be noted.

Contrary to the impression created by the US media at the time, we have known for years that the Tet offensive was a military defeat

for the Viet-Cong, and not for the US. The shock of the offensive's magnitude, however, served to blind US reporters and editors to the real military outcome, and served to reinforce the suspicion that had been building up among many of them: that the war was basically unwinnable.

Similarly in our case. This week's tragedy in the air over

on the morale of the soldiers fighting the war.

The argument that the war in Vietnam was unwinnable was not kept within select circles. American soldiers in Vietnam quickly became aware of that thesis, and reacted in very understandable fashion: They looked out primarily for their own skins until their political leaders could

Is it legitimate to be debating an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon now?

Moshav She'ar Yashuv seems, at first glance, to have little connection with the pros and cons of remaining or withdrawing from the security zone.

It is unavoidable, however, that the national shock engendered by the disaster will go on to serve as a catalyst for heating up the debate.

Even if the causes of the crash had little to do with actual events in the security zone, the fact is that our growing losses on the ground to Hizbullah actions over the past year make that debate very legitimate, and more urgent than ever.

A second aspect of the Vietnam analogy that may prove dangerously true in our case is the deadly effect the dramatic Vietnam debate in the American media had

work up the courage to withdraw from Vietnam.

THIS HAS not happened so far in Israel - which doesn't mean it won't happen.

Given the fact that we are a much more vociferously politicized society than the US and that the intermesh between our home front, our front-line soldiers and their families is much more intimate and intense, any public debate on the future of the security zone can be expected to have an even deeper effect on our soldiers' morale.

The security zone strategy worked relatively well for over 10 years to ensure the security of our northern border. But that is now far from the case. The deteriorating situation in the zone, in which

Israel's surrogate South Lebanese Army has, to all intents and purposes, collapsed, shifting the brunt of casualties from Hizbullah actions onto our own soldiers, is fast becoming untenable.

The situation thus requires an urgent reassessment, and it can no longer be postponed.

So far the debate has been between those who argue that we must withdraw from the zone in the hope that Hizbullah will not press its attacks into Israel proper, and those who argue that we must grit our teeth and stay put, while doing as much as possible to reduce our casualties.

Overlooked is a third option to these two disastrous choices: pressing what our political and military leaders periodically call a real and nasty war deeper into Lebanon, and into Syria, which is the godfather of Hizbullah.

Under the Rabin and Peres governments the IDF's hands were tied in Lebanon for fear of "undermining the peace process with Syria." It is high time we took a leaf out of Hafez Assad's book.

While declaring our continuing commitment to seeking peace with Syria, we must make it clear that Syria's use of Hizbullah to press a nasty war against us in the security zone while talking peace will be reciprocated - not in the zone itself, but where it hurts the most, in an extremely vulnerable Lebanon, and in Syria itself.

The writer comments on current affairs.

POSTSCRIPTS

WITHOUT EVER going to school, a four-year-old Malaysian girl has learned to read and write and do school work that normally 12-year-olds do.

The bespectacled Grace Lim Em Hui began reading when she was 17 months old, and was soon writing and doing math under the guidance of her father Joshua, a 33-year-old private tutor who earns a living teaching schoolchildren English and math.

Grace is so addicted to reading that she refuses to go to bed. "She wants to keep awake and read and read. Sometimes I have to take the cane and threaten her to make her sleep," said Grace's mother.

Grace, who has taught herself

English, Mandarin and Malay, agreed to a telephone interview, speaking in fluent English.

"Yes, I saw my picture, and what they wrote about me in the newspaper. My father and mother showed it to me," said the pig-tailed girl.

Asked what she would like to be when she grows up, she replied: "I don't know. Maybe an engineer."

Grace asks her parents questions on science, languages, mathematics and other topics that they can't answer without checking books. But she behaves just like any other child.

"She likes to play, eats normally and reads story books like 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,'" her mother said, adding that the Bible is one of her favorites.

MOST PEOPLE can tell a joke or two, but a Colombian man told about 12,000 jokes on live radio during a grueling 50-hour marathon.

Comedian Jose Ordonez said he did it to raise money for the tens of thousands of people made homeless by the country's guerrilla war and violence. Ordonez, 28, quipped that he had also performed more than two days worth

WHAT TO get the loved one on Valentine's Day... one idea that may not immediately spring to mind is a share in a cow.

A Belgian group has set up an Internet site listing hundreds of ideas for gifts. Most are fairly man-

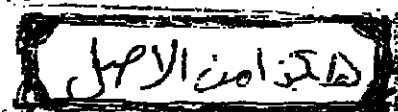
of one-liners with a view to his waistline, since he lost about five kg in the process. None of Caracol's jokes were repeated during the performance, but he used a computer in the radio station to provide him with punchlines when he was feeling especially punchy.

Ordonez said he plans to set a world record by telling a full 100 hours of jokes on live radio.

cds - watches and chocolates, CDs and binoculars.

But the one-10th share in a cow stands out.

How a woman might receive this token of esteem from a man must be open to question.



We could be different

Embodiment

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PHYSIOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Hadassah Medical

We could stop a different tragedy...

Thursday's helicopter disaster at She'ar Yashuv has reminded us all of our common fate, of the bonds of blood and steel that bind us together. Our hearts ache for the bereaved families as we grieve with them in their unspeakable and enduring affliction.

Whether we are left or right, secular or religious, rich or poor, educated or illiterate, Jew, Druse, or Beduin, male or female, for a few hours we are one extended family.

Beyond the tragedy of loss, however, lies a tragedy of a different kind. It is the almost certain likelihood that our mutual sense of solidarity will quickly disperse, that we shall soon fall again into bickering and conflict.

We shall again cast withering scorn on those who think differently from us, foment hatred against them, seek to delegitimize them, and to deny that they have any real right to express their opinions.

We shall again view every aspect of our social life in terms of black or white, right or wrong, for or against, friend or enemy.

Such a way of thinking, known as "two-valued orientation," has the supreme advantage of allowing us to form and hold "adult" opinions easily, without the need to gather a variety of facts, to analyze, compare, select, or question, without the need to separate emotion and prejudice from logic and reason.

Two-valued orientation relies on simplistic models of social interaction that obviate self-doubt, and substitute absolute convictions for continuous reassessment.

But the real world is not split into such clear, convenient divisions. We exist on a series of continuums - from extreme right to extreme left, from hard-line extremist to ideologically-committed secularist, from outrageously wealthy to wretchedly poor, from learning disabled to university professor.

The difference between each of us and others further up or down the scale is often not that great, and certainly no hard and fast dividing line can be drawn at any point along the continuum.

AMIEL SCHOTZ

Also, we are constantly moving along the various continua as our socioeconomic or educational situation changes, or as we adjust our political or religious attitudes. When scientists seek to verify the truth of a hypothesis or theory - often drawn up in the form of a model that places variables in a

...If we had the maturity to look for what unites us rather than what keeps us apart

set of relationships to each other - they test real outcomes against those predicted by the model.

Moreover, any true scientist will do everything in his or her power to disprove the theory by finding even one bit of data that it fails to predict.

When that happens, the theory is faulty, and must be rejected or adjusted. Only if no such conflict can be found is the scientist entitled to claim that the theory holds.

WOULDN'T it be admirable if politicians and policy-makers took a similar approach, if they spent more time considering the dangers inherent in their own proposed policies and sought ways to adjust them in order to minimize or obviate such hazards? Surely they would serve the nation better.

Sadly, it is much easier to demonstrate the dangers arising from the policies of our political opponents than it is to prove the advantages of our own.

It is, of course, true that human interaction is highly complex, and there are so many variables that no model can be relied upon to provide anything beyond the sketchiest prediction of the possible outcomes of any particular course of action.

This places governments in the invidious position of always having to make decisions and carry out policies on the basis of inadequate information, and with almost complete uncertainty regarding the consequences.

For example, an expert in labor relations told me how some years ago he was summoned to the office of the finance minister, who asked him for statistics to support a proposal he wished to make to the cabinet.

The expert explained that such data would take months to acquire, while those currently available were insufficient indicators for the proposed policy.

The minister thanked him politely, and showed him the door. Thus, in the end, government more often relies on gut feelings, experience and instinct than it does on hard or provable relations of cause and effect.

And yet, and yet... how nice it would be if politicians - and we, their supporters - could take a more honest look at proposed actions, rather than destructively criticizing those of others.

We might discover that our positions on the continuum were coming closer, that our apparent divisions were not so insurmountable as we tend to think.

Let us therefore applaud the initiative of the Likud's Michael Eitan, Labor's Yossi Beilin and their associates, who have taken the bold step of trying to do just that.

Their joint document setting out shared positions regarding Israel's stance on the final status negotiations with the Palestinians is based on just such a self-critical approach.

In their attempt to find common ground, to build a bridge between apparently irreconcilable viewpoints, they have invited the bitter resentment of many in their own political camps - of those of us who are too narrow-minded to admit that other positions are possible; of those who fear for their own political status; of those of us who always look for what's wrong with a new idea, rather than what's right about it.

If we can learn the Eitan-Beilin lesson of mutual respect, perhaps we could extend our current sense of national unity to the rest of the year, and change the ugly tone of our national debate.

The writer teaches English at Ben-Gurion University.



God's Army - or Israel's?

STUART A. COHEN

LAST month both Ha'aretz's weekend supplement and the Jerusalem Post Magazine featured articles on "God's Army."

Both pieces focused on the growing prominence of national religious conscripts in IDF elite combat units, a propensity which deserves to be considered one of the most significant of the several transformations currently affecting the sociological composition of our armed forces.

Since the IDF Manpower Branch refuses to release any relevant statistics, the precise extent of the trend cannot be gauged. But eyewitness evidence tells its own tale.

Once rare in volunteer field formations, the sight of a knitted kippa, the most obtrusive sign of male national religious affiliation, is now particularly commonplace in volunteer field formations.

Of late, it has also become obtrusive in the officer's training school, which in 1995-1996 was itself commanded by a graduate of a religious high school.

How are we to interpret such phenomena, and what are their implications for Israeli civil-military relations?

The intrinsic importance of these questions is amplified by two further circumstances.

One is the simultaneous decline in motivation to IDF service amongst segments of the secular population. The other is a halachic ruling issued by some national religious rabbis forbidding IDF troops to transfer either military bases or Jewish settlements on the West Bank to gentile control. Combined, these developments have generated anxious speculation.

Might not the disproportionate representation of national religious troops in the ranks (and, eventually, on the General Staff too) undermine the IDF's traditional image as a non-partisan "people's army," which both embodies and reflects the general will of the country's predominantly secular citizenry?

Should rabbinic push ever come to military shove, might not national religious soldiers choose to disobey orders rather than contravene the teachings of their spiritual guides and mentors?

None of the evidence presently

available sustains either apprehension.

And at a time such as this, when the entire country is mourning the loss of so many young soldiers, the mere notion of differentiating between those who wear kippot and those who don't is especially distasteful.

No more than other Israeli youngsters do national religious troops enlist in the IDF in order to further the interests of their own particular community. The suggestion that their willingness to volunteer for service in combat units follows some blueprint designed to "capture" the IDF for a specifically national religious cause constitutes a canard uncomfortably reminiscent of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

To the extent that their behavior is motivated by an acknowledged ideological impulse (and in many cases it owes much to the more mundane wish to be "one of the crowd" or prove their individual capacity to withstand the rigors of

whose homogeneity and strong ties of mutual affiliation make them particularly susceptible to mobilization for sectoral purposes.

The vast majority of national religious troops, like their secular brothers in arms, enlist in the IDF individually and without undergoing any extraordinary process of prior indoctrination or socialization.

The exceptions, which inevitably attract disproportionate publicity, are graduates of the pre-conscription religious academies (mekhinas kedum tzvativot) and members of hesder units.

But even when combined, both frameworks supply the IDF with less than 3,000 servicemen per year. Of these, only hesder troops are drafted en bloc - and even then only in company-sized infantry or armored formations.

It requires an ignorance (or deliberate disregard) of rudimentary military organizational requirements to portray so small

mutiny. But at the same time there is no cause to incriminate their more numerous colleagues (many of whom have roundly condemned that ruling), still less to tar their students wholesale with the brush of potential disaffection.

No religious troops have ever disobeyed orders on political grounds in the past, and there exists no solid evidence whatsoever to support the suggestion that all might do so in the future.

The real danger posed by the rising incidence of national religious enlistment does not lie in that phenomenon itself. It lies, rather, in the temptation it provides to ignore other societal trends that pose far more viable threats to Israel's military security.

Or to put matters another way: By focusing our attention so intently on the supposed perils of "God's army," we might be tempted to disregard those perils that do indeed sap the strength of the IDF - for example, the increasingly perilous relationship between the army and society.

As the chief of staff so eloquently pointed out in his impassioned address on the first anniversary of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, relations between Israel and its armed forces are currently undergoing shifts of potentially seismic proportions. The need to repair that symbiotic ranks as a pressing national priority.

Little can be achieved simply by rubbishing the alleged "over-motivation" of a particular segment of the military complement.

Instead of pondering the hypothetical hazards of religious enlistment, would it not be more appropriate - and altogether more sensible - to reflect on its proven advantages, and then consider how best we might apply the lessons thus learned in order to improve the preparedness of all Israeli youth for national service?

The writer is professor of political studies at Bar-Ilan University and a senior researcher at the BESA Center for Strategic Studies.

Embodiment of a dream

The decision to present my candidacy for the office of prime minister in the year 2000 was neither a media gesture nor a provocation. It was an attempt to improve the bargaining position of Israel's Arab minority in issues concerning its political empowerment.

Anyone looking at the country's new electoral system would have to come to two major conclusions:

1. Israel's parliament is drawn up along demographic ethnic and religious lines, owing to the separation of votes into two primary types, the presidential vote and the parliamentary one. The former is essentially an ideological vote; the latter is essentially one of identity.

This composition does nothing to resolve the political marginalization of the Arabs in Israel, despite the increase in the number of Arab Knesset members.

2. Generally speaking, Israel's parliament has lost some of its power and significance to a system which has yet to define whether it is a presidential system or a parliamentary democracy.

Given this decline in the status of the Knesset, the political influence of the largely-excluded Arab minority in Israel has also decreased, despite the fact that its relative representation in the Knesset has increased.

If so, what reason remains to ignore the second, more significant, political field - that of the election of prime minister, where the number of Arab votes still makes a difference? That is, of course, that we are able to liberate

AZMI BISHARA

ourselves from the idea that we, a priori, belong to one of the two camps.

An Arab third candidate may force the whole system to go

In my candidacy for the premiership in 2000 lies a vision of equality and shared civic participation

through a second round, if no candidate receives more than 50 percent of the total votes. In that case, no candidate will be able to make it in the second round without our support.

Such support ought not to be granted without a quid pro quo of political benefits, in the form of genuine political rights.

Should one of the prime ministerial candidates obtain more than 50 percent of the votes in the first round, our support would not make much of a difference anyway.

So much for the pragmatic side of things. But this proposal is not only pragmatic; it is based on a vision - a dream, if you like.

IT WILL not be only an exercise in politics. The notion of Arab candidacy deals seriously with the vision of equality and shared civic participation in a "state of all its

citizens."

In spite of some progress in its civic culture during the last decade, contemporary Israel has been unable to turn citizenship into the cornerstone of the relationship between the state and the individual. Israel is the state of the Jews de facto and de jure. It is a very unconventional, historical nation, a nation one may join only by belonging to the Jewish religion. The only remaining dispute seems to be whether joining the Jewish holy community takes place according to the Orthodox, Conservative or Reform rituals.

The vision embodied in my candidacy is a separation of citizenship from religion. It is a dream of normalization of Israeli democracy.

Opposing opinions, naturally, were expected, as was the attempt to legalize discrimination between Arab and Jewish citizenship by preventing Arabs from contending for prime ministerial office.

The Israeli political system rejected the legalization of national discrimination in this instance. But it has not yet either overcome or delegitimized discrimination itself.

The writer is a Hadash-Balad MK.

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Our sons, our brothers

By ABRAHAM RABINOVICH

The family has grown so large, some five million already, that we have difficulty recognizing each other.

But in truth, we haven't been much of a family for a long time now, and for reasons other than size. The rifts are so many and so deep that we have come to resemble feuding tribes more than family, tribes who share the same space and even the same name but not the same values.

It was the little old ladies on buses this week who were the first to remind us of what we used to be. Little old ladies clucking and shaking their heads and waving their clenched fists in grief as the announcer on the radio recited the names of the helicopter victims. On virtually every bus, Little old Moroccan ladies grieving for the victims whoever they were because whoever they were was family. Reminding us of what we used to be and, in moments like this, still are.

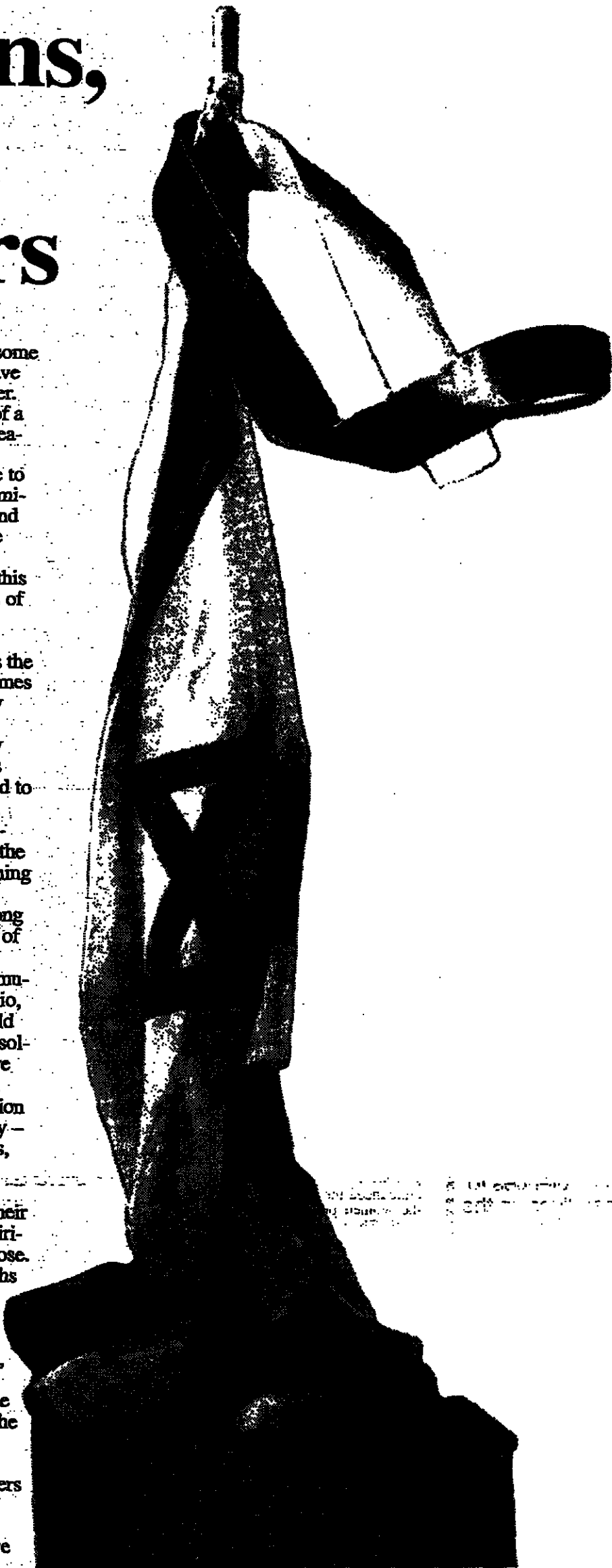
It is odd that numbers make a difference. Many soldiers have fallen over the years in the prime of their lives, touching those of us unconnected to them only fleetingly in their passing. We have long since hardened ourselves to the death of young men.

This time, gathered around the communal campfire that is television and radio, we found ourselves focusing. We could not help but focus on the death of 73 soldiers. The helicopter victims whom we found ourselves looking at were not a faceless mass. They were a cross-section of the nation, ethnically and politically - residents of kibbutzim and settlements, Hesder yeshiva students and secular punies.

Yet they shared something beyond their uniforms - an affirmation of life, a spiritual kinship, a sense of common purpose. We saw them close up - in photographs but more tellingly in the testimony of family and friends.

With awesome dignity and self-control, awesome precision of expression, they made these beautiful young men come alive for us, made us party to the joy and promise of their lives and to the awful sense of loss at their departure.

We shared the families' grief to the point of tears. In their death, the soldiers had become our sons and brothers. In their death they had shown us, as a nation, who we are. Or at least who we can be.



A crumpled flag with black ribbon flies over the Tourism Ministry. (Brian Hendler)

Unity in agony

By HERS KENON

February, it seems, is a most cursed month.

A year ago this month the country was smitten by a bus bomb in Jerusalem. This horror was followed in quick succession by another bus bomb in Jerusalem, and a massive bomb at Dizengoff Center in Tel Aviv.

Then, as now, the mood of the country was palpably somber. Then, as now, the faces of those killed smiled out at us from the red and black pages of the country's tabloids. Then, as now, dozens of lives were capsulized in two-

minute radio spots. Then, as now, relatives collapsed over fresh graves.

But there is a major difference. Last year's tragedy was cause for division, for protests, for anger, for unseemly debate about who was ultimately to blame for the casualties, and who was "dancing on the blood." Arguments erupted between right and left at makeshift memorials that were set up at the location of the attacks. It was downright difficult to listen to the radio talk shows, because of the recriminations going back and forth.

The bus bombings were tragedies that, like the Rabin murder, split the nation, factionalized it.

What happened Tuesday night had the opposite effect.

Granted, there was anger following the crash: anger at fate, anger at having to be in Lebanon, anger at Hizbullah. But no anger at each other. The agony of the families and the ability of everyone to identify and empathize with them was a unifying force.

A few hours before the officially declared Day of Mourning went into effect on Wednesday, a restaurateur hung a sign in his downtown Jerusalem window that read: "Because of the sad occurrence, we are closing and joining

in the pain of the bereaved families."

That simple sign reflected the attitude of a nation. Business did not, could not, continue as normal. Not because of a cabinet proclamation, not because of a government decision, but because people were just unable to go on with their lives as usual. The disaster was internalized - people took it home with them, to work with them, to bed with them. It sat heavy, very heavy, on the mind.

In times of tragedy, the tired axiom runs, Israel unites. Last year showed that this is not always the case. Tuesday's disaster showed that sometimes it still is.

Young pilots introduced to death

The young men of the IAF are the 'cream of the crop' - and now this. Arie O'Sullivan talks to helicopter pilots

"I would rather have my wounds to heal again than hear say how I got them," *Coriolanus*, Act 2, Scene 2.

They have lost their swagger. Their talk is muted. They don't look up anymore when they walk. And that self-confident smile is now just a thin straight line under the nose.

Israeli helicopter pilots have seen better times.

"The results are very harsh. I personally, and my friends, are having very difficult feelings," said Maj. Y., a helicopter pilot and operations officer for Air Force activity in Lebanon.

The burden of responsibility on transport helicopters flying into a war zone, in foggy weather, is heavy. And if there is any guilt, it was certainly magnified by statements like those of Col. A., commander of the Nahal Brigade: "What took Hizbullah three years to do happened in one fell swoop."

But that's not really fair, is it? Pilots in Israel have traditionally been hailed as the cream of the crop, the "best," infallible. And then this.

But for the IDF in general and the Air Force in particular, the road to recovery is quick.

"I have flown many times in the Yasur," said Maj. Y., using the Hebrew name of the CH-53. "It is an excellent helicopter and the pilots chosen to fly them are among the best."

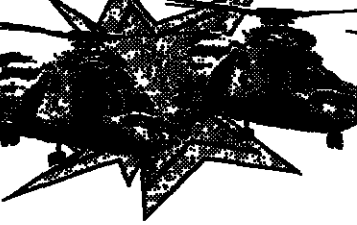
"We are not immune from mistakes. There should be no doubt about that. There are an unlimited number of scenarios that the pilot could have encountered. If it was possible to find a patent or a robot to solve these problems we would be better off. But that's not possible. You have to put people there and we may make mistakes."

It is easy to say that Hizbullah is also to blame for the deaths. They forced the IDF to seek alternatives to the vulnerable supply convoys moving on the open roads in the security zone. More than half of the soldiers killed in south Lebanon were felled by roadside bombs or booby traps. Here the

Air Force was providing what it believed to be a safe way to bypass these threats.

"We were presenting a possibility of taking soldiers into Lebanon other than on the ground, which was becoming more and more costly. The option of flying was expanding the possibilities of exchanging forces," said Maj. Y., himself a pilot of Apache helicopters. "The responsibility [among CH-53] pilots is very heavy. It accompanies them all the time."

Lt.-Col. G., a CH-53 pilot, said



morale among the squadron now was very low. "The atmosphere here is tough, very tough. There is this fear, but it is part of the sad reality of the IAF. There are victims, but we live with it," he said. "For the young pilots it is much more difficult. Those of my age have been, to my regret, intro-

"The atmosphere here is tough, very tough. There is this fear, but it is a part of the sad reality of the IAF."

-Lt.-Col. G.

"In some way it is like the first time you get behind the wheel after being involved in a traffic accident. Yes, there is a thought in your mind that you have to take more caution. But this is the prevalent feeling in all of the IAF," Lt.-Col. G. said.

The CH-53 is the workhorse of the Israeli airborne troops. The 1960s-vintage chopper has been upgraded with enhanced avionics and is considered safer and more dependable. But unlike fixed-winged aircraft, it can't glide, not even a little. So when the two CH-53s collided they dropped like stones.

The Air Force has a tradition of debriefing itself, and integrity among pilots has been enhanced with the introduction of videotaped flights from cameras in the cockpits. But there is no camera in the CH-53 and no black box, only a tape recorder in the cockpit. As pilots see it, the number of things that can go wrong is immense.

"This obligates us to know the regulations very well. Pilots are highly trained and disciplined to react to sudden and radical changes," said Maj. Y. "But you can't prepare yourself for everything."

The feeling among the military is that the crash was the result of human error, something the five-man commission of inquiry appointed by Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai is trying to find out.

Naturally, after an accident of this magnitude, said 33-year-old Maj. Y., no one wanted to jump to hasty conclusions about the reasons for the collision.

"We need to wait for the results of the commission of inquiry," he said. "But we have to talk about this and get it out in the open. We can't keep it in. It is not easy. Pilots and airmen are usually closed people."

Pilots are not afraid, Maj. Y. said, only "concerned." "Concern is inseparable from professionalism. Whoever is not concerned

duced to death." He said recovering from the blow had to be done as quickly as possible.

Continued on Page 18

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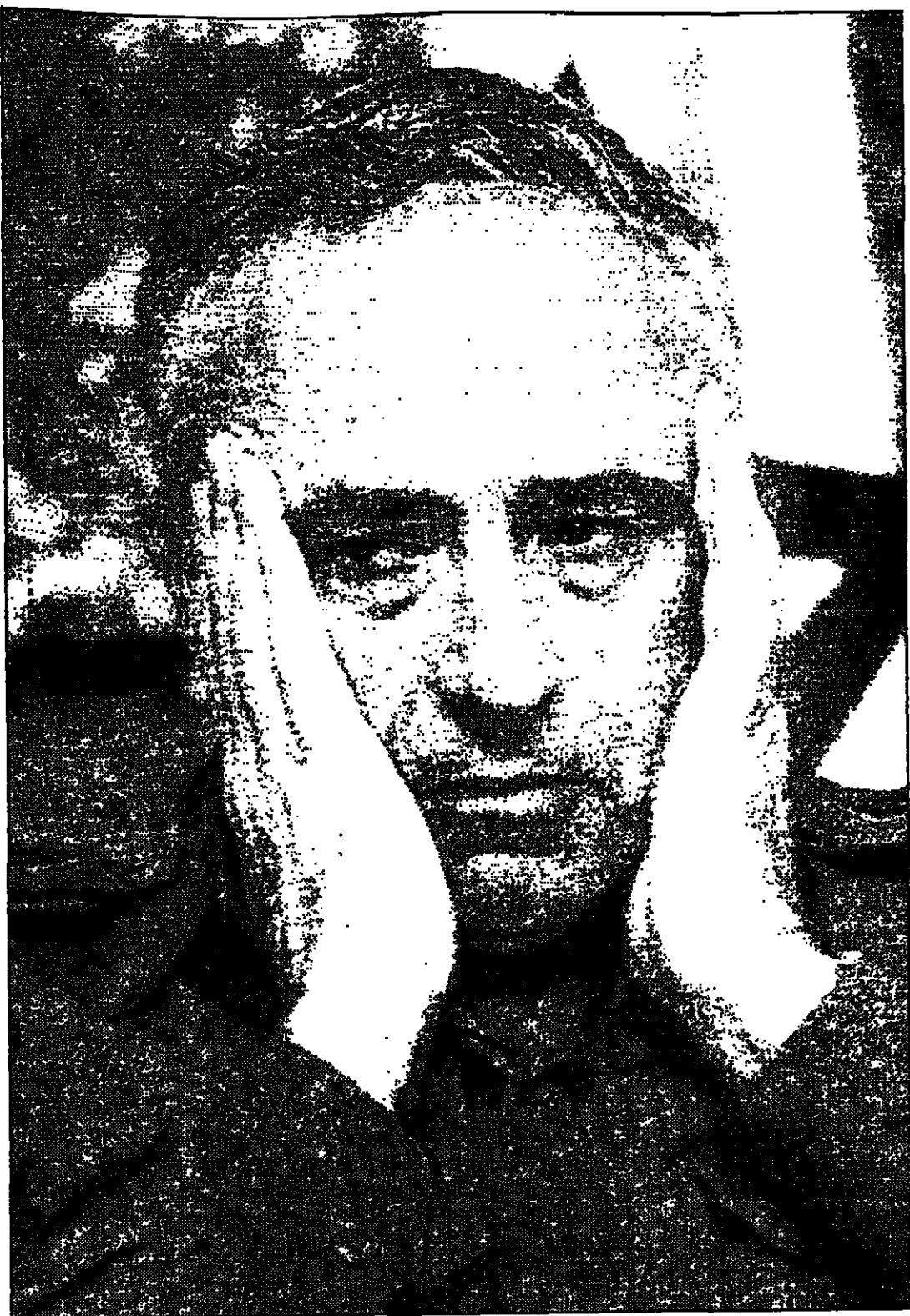
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Chief of Staff Amnon Shahak holds his face in his hands Wednesday at a press conference. (Reuters)

How do we cope with this?

Psychologists and sociologists believe that no one can avoid emotional confusion after such a tragedy, Judy Siegel-Itzkovich reports



A soldier weeps during the funeral of Tom Kita'in at Neveh Shalom. (AP)

‘W’as it the bad ones who killed them?’ asked a five-year-old boy, after being told by his kindergarten teacher Wednesday morning about the loss of 73 precious Israeli soldiers the night before. Inured to the routine of leading her pre-schoolers through reciting Psalms, venting fears and expressing anger after each terror or Katyusha attack they had heard about in their short lives, the teacher this time was at a loss for words. ‘Two of our helicopters collided in the air,’ she said after a moment. ‘It was an accident.’

There was no tangible enemy to blame this time, and psychologists and social workers analyzing this week’s national disaster suggested that such a situation makes coping even more difficult. ‘What we feel is not anger, but pain, shock, helplessness and sadness. If there were someone or some organization to blame, there would be a release to some of these feelings,’ says Prof. Zahava Solomon, a psychiatric epidemiologist at Tel Aviv University’s School of Social Work and a recognized expert in post-traumatic stress disorder.

This gets to everybody. One wonders this week how the Israeli psyche stands such pummeling, loss after loss, funeral after funeral, without becoming cold to the suffering or collapsing under the weight of incessant tragedy.

‘We’re the world champions in dealing with tragedy throughout our history.’

—Prof. Yisrael Orbach

‘We’re the world champions in dealing with tragedy throughout our history... It’s part of our identity — not that we wish it so or have asked for it. The Jew has been a victim, but the people survive,

and that is our victory,’ says Bar-Ilan University psychologist Prof. Yisrael Orbach. ‘But, of course, this doesn’t minimize the great personal loss of the families involved or the sadness in the nation.’

to war and they risk their lives. When they lose them, we feel guilty.’ But Noy, who himself has a son serving now in Lebanon and waited anxiously to get a phone call like anyone else in the same situation this week, says the chain of losses doesn’t necessarily have a permanent effect on the soldiers’ willingness to defend the country.

Surprisingly, the telephones at Eran (Emotional First Aid) were significantly less busy than usual the day after the crash. ‘During the Scud attacks in the Gulf War, the phones were ringing off the hook because the people were full of anxiety,’ reports Tal Perry, the Jerusalem branch coordinator of the volunteer group. ‘All our volunteers called to ask if they should come in to help on Wednesday, but we saw there was no need. After such disasters, friends and

acquaintances naturally open up and talk about things. That gives support, and fewer need an anonymous voice over the phone line. And our regular callers who suffer from personal pressures and problems feel embarrassed to discuss such things, which are overshadowed by the personal and national losses of this tragedy. But we expect that the regular volume of calls will return in a few days.’

The accident in She’ar Yashuv ‘hits everyone emotionally,’ adds Prof. Haim Granot of Bar-Ilan University’s School of Social Work, who heads its mass-emergencies project. ‘I study disasters and their effects on organizations,’ says the New York-born researcher, ‘and in this country, there is never a shortage of

Continued on Page 18

The end of innocence

Amy Klein reports on a funeral from a different kind of place — Neveh Shalom, the ‘oasis of peace’

It is hard to imagine that there were 72 other funerals like the one at Neveh Shalom for Sgt. Tom Kita'in. It is hard to believe that 72 other places witnessed the eerie images: a winding dirt path, sun shards piercing the gray blanket of sky, hundreds silently encircling the taut Israeli flag in the ground.

One by one, white long-stemmed orchids from classmates, orange carnations from parents’ friends, red wreaths from the bright green-bereted Nahal soldiers — were placed on Tom Kita'in's grave.

But the funeral at Neveh Shalom for Tom Kita'in was different from the other funerals. It did not take place in a military cemetery. There was no military salute, no firing of guns. That is because Neveh Shalom, like Tom, is different.

Founded in 1972 to promote peace and coexistence between Arabs and Jews, Neveh Shalom today has 30 families — 15 Arab and 15 Jewish — living, working and now, mourning together. Tom Kita'in, age 20, was the first male soldier from this unique place to go into the army. He is their first tragedy.

Neveh Shalom is located near Latrun, on the Jerusalem/Tel Aviv highway. Hanging on the edge of the 100-member settlement, the cemetery overlooks verdant fields and the palatial Latrun monastery.

The funeral was somber. There were no loud sobs, no outbursts; quiet tears streamed down the faces of even the professional TV photographers. The Kita'ins — Boaz, Daniella, and their three other children, Yonatan, 18, Amit, 14, Orit, 10 — huddled tightly in front of Tom's grave.

The Kita'ins moved to Neveh Shalom in 1985 from Kibbutz Shoval. Boaz grew up at Shoval and Daniella did her army service there, also in the Nahal unit like Tom. They are both educators: Boaz is the education principal at the elementary school and Daniella works with groups on conflict resolution.

‘The Kita'ins are a family of

highly principled people who always worry about values of peace and equality,’ said Abdessalam Najjar, who was Tom's teacher from age nine through 13 at Neveh Shalom's School for Peace.

The School for Peace is Neveh Shalom's elementary school. It is

his speech at the funeral. The many speakers at the funeral — from Neveh Shalom, the army, from Tom's high school — portray a boy who embodied the values of this unique community.

‘Smiley face, gorgeous, you didn't want wars,’ said Dafna Kate-Schwartz, a friend of the

Neveh Shalom today has 30 families — 15 Arab and 15 Jewish — living, working, and now, mourning together.

also the only school in the country which is fully binational and bilingual, where Arabs and Jews — and their holidays, laws, and customs — are treated as fully equal. One hundred twenty-seven students attend the School for Peace, 40 from Neveh Shalom, the rest from nearby Arab and Jewish settlements.

‘Today Arabs and Israelis marched behind the coffin of an Israeli soldier,’ said Najjar. ‘But Tom wasn't a just a soldier. He was our son. He grew up with my children.’

The children of Neveh Shalom go to school together from nursery until the end of eighth grade. For high school they separate to Arab and Israeli schools. But the real separation is the army. On this oasis of cooperation, the reality that Israelis serve and Palestinians don't is something they have grown up with. And on this day of their first army casualty, the community is united.

‘As your Palestinian teacher, Jewish soldier, so many Palestinians cry,’ Najjar said in

joins points, but if there are no points the street is meaningless.’ Perhaps this best expressed that Tom was a true child of Neveh Shalom: ‘A path is different because it has meaning every step of the way.’

‘WE SPEND a lot of time working together towards coexistence and peace,’ says Najjar, who is sure that it won't affect relations between Jewish and Arab families in Neveh Shalom.

‘But we will have to be more realistic. The reality is that people here should be used to deaths. We are not special or different from anyone else.’

Anwar Daoud, the principal at the School for Peace, thinks that Tom's death shows that Neveh Shalom is not working hard enough.

‘On a personal level I am very sad. Tom was my student, my neighbor, my colleague's son. But on a political level I am very angry. We haven't worked hard enough to stop the war in South Lebanon.’

Daoud mentions the five MKs who had paid their respects to the family that day: ‘The MKs should come here on a regular day to learn from us. If we can influence people today, we should work together to make long-term changes.’

It shouldn't be in vain...

This poem was read at Tom's funeral by a friend of the family on behalf of his mother:

To my son, two weeks old:

My little son, you are the one who knows
Out of all the mothers you chose me
May we give one another love and sorrow
happiness and worry
And that it all shouldn't be in vain
Please, that it all shouldn't be in vain



The Kita'in family huddles tightly at Tom's funeral.

(Isaac Harari)

سنة اول الالهي

Partial view of an advertisement on the right edge of the page, including the text 'The of the' and 'DRIVE SLOW DRIVE WITH'.

The eye of the pilot

The developers of the Yasur helicopter have tried to accommodate every safety feature possible in its design, but humans still have to operate it, and they are not fault-free. Steve Rodan reports

Nehemia Dagan recalls flying a routine test of the Yasur helicopter in the Negev 20 years ago when he felt the chopper smack into something. Part of the main rotor blade snapped and the helicopter began to fall from a height of about 10,000 feet.

Minutes later, the helicopter crashed and caught fire. The miracle: Dagan and his crew survived.

There are different types of accidents," recalls the 57-year-old Dagan, who rose to the rank of brigadier general and commander of a Yasur squadron. "When the helicopter hits something, the rotor blades break and you can't land. You just fall." For the two Yasur helicopters and their 73 passengers this week, there was no escape.

Pilots who fly the Yasur compare it to a Mack truck in the sky.

Manufactured by Sikorsky Aircraft, of Stratford, Connecticut, the CH-53, the biggest helicopter in the West, has been in the Israel Air Force since 1969.

It is a huge aircraft that can transport up to 65 passengers and a crew of two pilots and a mechanic. The helicopter has a range of 413 kilometers and a maximum speed of 315 kilometers per hour.

Months after the first Yasur, the Hebrew name of the US-made CH-53, arrived in Israel, the helicopter started earning a reputation for excellence.

In December 1969, two Yasur helicopters slipped deep into Egypt and carried off an entire Soviet radar station at Ras Arub. The transport helicopter was used extensively during the 1973 Yom Kippur War and 1982 Operation Peace for Galilee.

Today, the IAF has 42 such helicopters, according to the Middle East Military Balance of Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies.

"It is extremely reliable and very heavy," Dagan, today the head of foreign operations for the United Jewish Appeal, says. "There is no substitute for the Yasur."

Indeed, many who have flown the Yasur say the weakest element in the helicopter is the pilot.

In the IAF, the courses for flying a Yasur are long. A pilot must first undergo a basic course, then learn

flying light helicopters. A pilot must have about five years of training before he is eligible to fly a Yasur.

The most important traits for a Yasur pilot, veterans say, are maturity and common sense. "The requirement is for a pilot to do several things at the same time under changing conditions," says Lt.-Col. (Res.) Ofer Ben-Peretz, a former Yasur squadron commander. "This is the difference between a military flight and a civilian flight, the latter of which deals with the expected." But common sense is the one thing that the Yasur cannot

Vertigo happens to many of us. The question is how fast you can recover from it.

—Major Yigal

instinct to steer the huge helicopter out of any imagined danger. "Vertigo happened to me. It happens to many of us," said Yigal, who did not want his full name used. "It's an important part of flying and the question is how fast you can recover from it." Ben-Peretz agrees, saying the pilot must be most aware of his surroundings when he is about to land. "The problem of seeing is critical in the landing," he says. "You have to see where you are. A plane can land by instrumentation. A helicopter cannot."

The margin of error in helicopters is extremely narrow. Yasur pilots say. Unlike planes, military helicopters on missions are trained to fly at the lowest altitude possible to avoid enemy radar. One false move can send the helicopter hurtling toward the ground, and at that point, the crew is virtually helpless.

"The basic difference between a plane and a helicopter is that in a plane you have an ejector seat," says Lt.-Col. Dahi, who flew the Yasur from 1971 to 1994. "You have a last chance. In the helicopter, there is no ejector seat because of the propeller above."

When the pilot loses control, the Yasur becomes a death trap. In 1977, 54 paratroopers and helicopter crew were killed when a Yasur crashed near Jericho. A committee of inquiry determined that the helicopter was overloaded and flew too close to the ground.

"In my 20 years of flying the Yasur, I didn't encounter any serious technical problems," Dahi says. "The human error is clearly the dominant factor. Most of the accidents have been the result of human error."

An Air Force study of accidents from 1982 to 1994 said 43 percent of the most serious helicopter crashes stemmed from human error. More than a quarter of accidents stemmed from error by the ground crew. Less than a third of the accidents could be traced to technical failure.

The most recent Yasur crash before this week's collision was in the Judean desert on March 31, 1996, when seven crew members were killed. The investigation of the accident has not been completed



but military sources say the likely cause was human error.

Privately, many Yasur pilots say this was probably the cause of Tuesday's collision. Although the Yasur is not equipped with a black box, its internal cockpit conversations are recorded and investigators say they usually have enough evidence to determine the cause of the lion's share of helicopter accidents. IDF sources say the investigation of this week's crash has so far not found any indication of a technical failure aboard either of the Yasurs.

The chances of human error appear more likely during bad weather. One hard rule for pilots is to avoid flying through low clouds, particularly in mountainous regions. Bad weather is a tough enough mission when the Yasur is flying alone. But when two helicopters are cruising together, the dangers multiply.

"You have to use a lot of instruments that give you a lot of options. But what determines things in the end is the eye of the pilot," says Lt.-Col. S., who is familiar with the current Yasur

squadron and just wanted the initial of his first name used. "The Yasur must land so in the end you have to see. There's no replacement for the eyes." Still, the manufacturers of the Yasur have tried to include every possibility. If one engine fails, there is always another. If the avionic system breaks down, there is a backup.

But there is no replacement for the rotor blade. Pilots say if as little as a meter of the blade is missing — about 4 percent of its length — the result is loss of balance and free-fall. "If that is cut, you're finished," says S. "There's no chance." Just about every helicopter veteran can recall his brush with death. For S., however, the

potential damage would have been unprecedented in Israeli history. It was soon after the Yom Kippur War and the entire cabinet and the chief of staff were on board the Yasur flying over Gaza, returning from a ceremony in which Egypt handed over the remains of Israeli spies it had executed in the 1950s.

Suddenly, S. felt the Yasur jerk out of control. Part of the rotor blade had snapped.


The pilot knew he had to land immediately or Israel would no longer have a government or military brass. Indeed, after the episode, the government decided that ministers would never fly together.

"The helicopter was shaking," S. recalls. "I had a very uncomfortable feeling. It took several minutes to land. I had enough time to think that I might not be able to do this." But S. did not let this close call stop him from flying his next mission.

Yasur veterans say the loss of so many soldiers, as painful as it was, is a daily risk of a pilot's profession. The crash will not make them hesitate from continuing to carry out their duties. As they see it, pilots live to fly.

"We don't say that this can't happen us," Dagan, the brigadier, says. "But it doesn't stop anybody. All pilots know is that they have to fly."

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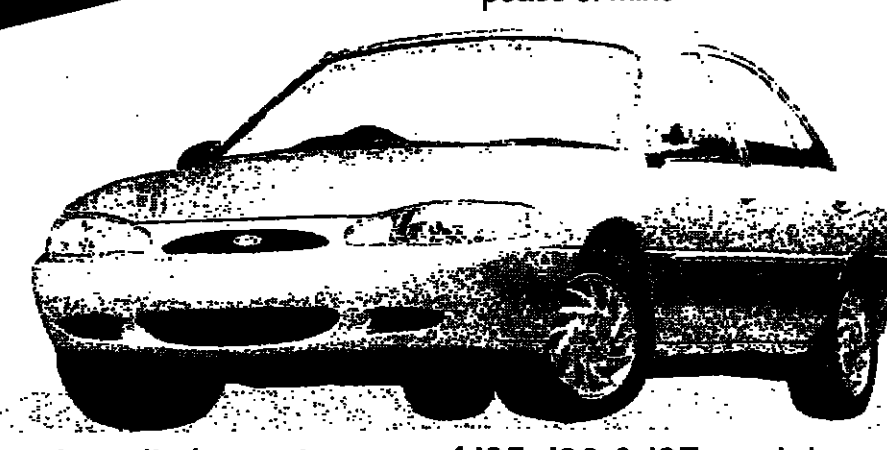
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Rethinking southern Lebanon

A public debate on a unilateral withdrawal from the security zone could gain speed as a result of the helicopter collision, David Makovsky writes

The tragic deaths of 73 IDF soldiers have had a numbing effect, but Tuesday's helicopter accident, more than Hizbullah attacks, could give way to something the public has not witnessed since Israel established the security zone in 1985: a public debate about whether the IDF should unilaterally withdraw from southern Lebanon.

It has been difficult to raise the issue of an Israeli pullback from south Lebanon; inevitably, debate is stifled by those who equate merely raising the issue with a prize for Hizbullah attacks.

Moreover, since only elite units serve in southern Lebanon, unlike the broad swath of reserves who have done duty over the years in the West Bank and Gaza, much of the public does not think about Lebanon as it does about the Palestinian issue.

This may change soon. Even before this week's searing tragedy, there were preliminary signals that calls for withdrawal could gain new force.

This week, ex-war hero and Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani became the first minister in the Netanyahu government to call for a unilateral pullback from southern Lebanon.

At a seminar at Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies last week, Labor Party leadership candidate Yossi Beilin said: "Our soldiers have turned into sitting ducks for Hizbullah. We need to get out of Lebanon unilaterally with the aid of a third party."

Beilin believes Israel's capability to use massive force in the event of violation, combined with the imposition of a force like France to patrol southern Lebanon and fill the vacuum created by Israel's absence is something that should be considered.

Driving the statements of both Beilin and Kahalani are their conclusions about the status quo. First, over the last 15 years, Israel has been unable to develop a winning strategy in dealing with Hizbullah, despite trying an endless variety of military tactics.

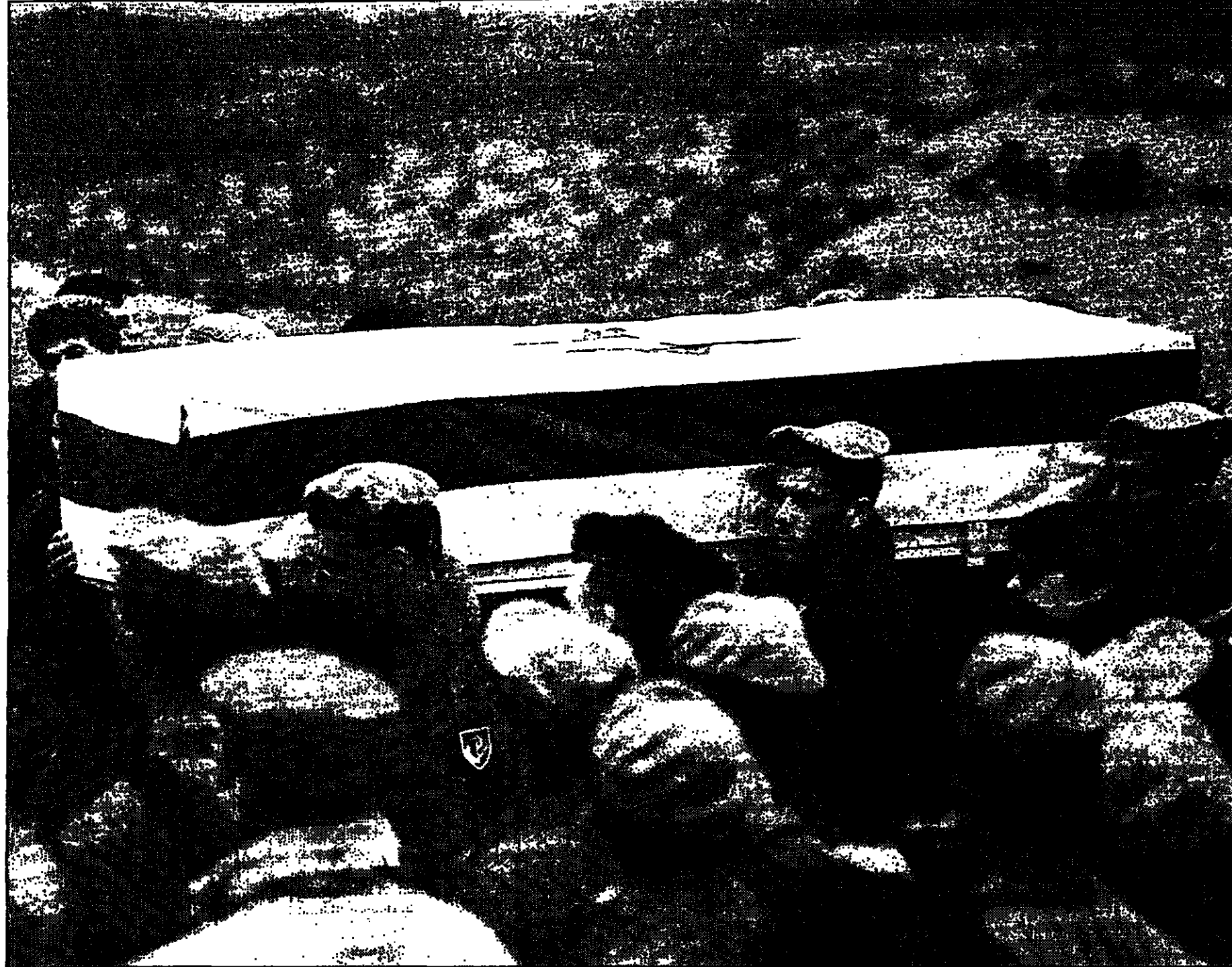
The only result is that Hizbullah has grown stronger. There are virtually no security officials who believe that Hizbullah can be crushed, despite repeated threats by IDF commanders over the last 15 years following fatal incidents.

When Israel first arrived in Lebanon, it was greeted by local Shi'ites with rice. When it refused to leave due to security concerns, it was greeted with Katyushas. Hizbullah has grown as a guerrilla movement, partly due to public support among residents in southern Lebanon, who are grateful to it for winning exemptions from Israeli bombing of villages due to understandings reached in the aftermath of Operation Accountability and Grapes of Wrath.

Moreover, as Foreign Minister David Levy pointed out this week, Iranian military resupply of Hizbullah has sharply increased. US officials confirm that in the

past, three Iranian planes per year would provide arms for Hizbullah. Now that figure is up to three planes per month. And Beilin and Kahalani also note that if Hizbullah desires, it can use new technology to fire rockets at northern border towns beyond the range of the security zone which was set up 12 years ago under different conditions, namely when the Katyushas had shorter-range rock-

ets. Now, the security zone cannot protect against Hizbullah, should the organization seek to fire Katyushas at northern border towns.



The fatalities from this week's accident may speed up discussion of a withdrawal from southern Lebanon quicker than any Hizbullah attack has ever done. (AP)

ets. Now, the security zone cannot protect against Hizbullah, should the organization seek to fire Katyushas at northern border towns.

Another of their conclusions is that a pullback from southern Lebanon has moved from the backburner to front and center, ironically, due to the Netanyahu government's refusal to yield the entire Golan. Since Syria has said

Labor believed that one of the key benefits of yielding the Golan Heights to Syria would be a "package deal," namely attaining the consent of Damascus to have the Lebanese Army deploy southward and disarm Hizbullah.

If Israel leaves Lebanon, Syria figures there will be no Israeli domestic backing for a Golan deal. Therefore, it is no coincidence that Kahalani is the first minister to call for a pullback from Lebanon, since he founded his Third Way party to halt a Golan withdrawal. Moreover, this call has been endorsed by Beilin, who says, "I am very dubious that Syrian President Hafez Assad has indeed made a strategic decision for peace." In short, the less the Golan option is alive, the more the future of southern Lebanon is

When he came into office, Netanyahu thought there was a negotiated alternative to the package-deal approach. The Netanyahu government hoped to obtain explicit Syrian consent to negotiate a Lebanese pullback involving deployments of the Lebanese Army in the south. This idea became dubbed as "Lebanon

ued presence in southern Lebanon can be exploited by Syria as an excellent pressure point for the Golan negotiations.

Without either a winning strategy to demolish Hizbullah or

pullout from Lebanon. Hence, the unilateral approach fills a conceptual vacuum. Beilin and Kahalani believe such a pullback is also feasible.

The Labor MK believes Israel's deterrent capability to use massive force in the event of violation combined with the imposition of a force like France to patrol southern Lebanon and fill the vacuum of Israel's absence should be something that Israel should consider.

Indeed, over the last year, France's Foreign Minister Herve de Charette has frequently offered to deploy French troops in the area. A country like France, which may not be one of Israel's favorites, could have more leverage, the Beilin argument goes. Specifically, if Israel is seen as

clearly trying to withdraw from Arab territory, subsequent infiltrations across the border by the Syrian-backed Hizbullah would entangle Damascus with the European country it cares the most about, France.

At the same time, Israel would not be placing its security in the hands of foreigners since Israel retains overwhelming military deterrent strength, the proponents

life in the north won't be without suffering from Hizbullah and Palestinian terror." He continued, "the question from a military point of view is where do we prefer to confront them when civilians are the target? I propose not to withdraw."

Ya'alon's statements reflect the views of the security establishment, which consistently has opposed a unilateral approach. Curiously, the US has also shunned the unilateral approach. In a briefing for reporters this week, a US official spoke of a possible security vacuum in southern Lebanon in the event of an Israeli pullout. Yet some suspect that Washington also fears that such a pullback could shatter long-held hopes for an Israel-Syria peace treaty.

A CRUCIAL question in evaluating whether the Beilin-Kahalani

Our soldiers have turned into sitting ducks for Hizbullah. We need to get out of Lebanon unilaterally with the aid of a third party.

—Yossi Beilin

idea would win Syrian acquiescence is distinguishing it from

Netanyahu's failed solitary effort of last summer. The main distinction would be the involvement of the international community, and its willingness to back-use troops and other means to shore up its support.

While Syria does not want a unilateral Israeli pullback due to a weakening of leverage on the Golan, some argue it would be constrained internationally from enabling Hizbullah to use an Israeli departure as a springboard for further attacks. Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri has indicated that if Israel leaves in accordance with UN Resolution 425, the Lebanese Army would indeed deploy in the south as Israel has wished.

Unknowns remain. Clear statements by Syria, Lebanon, Hizbullah and Iran about their response to a unilateral withdrawal are crucial before Israel can make any decisions. Governments like France, which argue that Israel should just withdraw from Lebanon, need to do some basic groundwork.

They need to obtain unambiguous public — not private — statements from the leaders of all four about how they would react to an Israeli withdrawal. Moreover, apart from setting up patrols in southern Lebanon, this would have to be matched by a willingness to impose a variation of international sanctions or military actions against these parties in the event that they violate their word. This obviously must be supplemented with an understanding between the IDF and foreign forces that Israel cannot stand idly by if infiltrations continue subsequent to a pullback from southern Lebanon.

Once these variables are clarified, the government and the public will have the information needed to decide whether or not to pull back. Terms for such a pullback have yet to be met, but at least a 12-year-old policy is now being rethought.

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MIDDLE ISRAEL



By AMOTZ ASA-EL

It's been a mere three decades since helicopters loomed prominently among Israel's symbols of ingenuity, daring and self-confidence.

Back then, an inventive IDF stunned Syrian forces by utilizing combat helicopters, while conquering the southern Golan Heights. Such operations, like the rest of the Six Day War, besides granting Israel the geographic advantage it so sorely lacked since its establishment, ultimately symbolized her short-lived assumption of the moral, strategic, and tactical high ground in the Middle Eastern conflict.

Strategically, Israel's goal was simple - to survive - and morally, few in the free world doubted in those days the justice of Israel's cause; the Arab world openly sought Israel's downright extinction while the West still vividly recalled the Holocaust.

And so, devoid of the distress that normally accompanies the "what" dilemmas of the disoriented and the "why" agonies of the guilt-ridden, Israelis focused on such tactical "how" questions as which would be the best way to utilize a chopper.

Set against this backdrop, one cannot avoid contemplating the deeper context of this week's tragedy, which, at the end of the day, begins and ends with that 25-

year-old curse called Lebanon. There is a great temptation to fatalistically dismiss this crash as yet another providential whim, the Israeli alternative for the numerous earthquakes, tornados, typhoons or volcanic eruptions which routinely kill thousands in many places, but not here.

Yet that would be mere escapism. The fact is that had it not been for the security-zone quagmire in which we are submerged the pilots would not have been compelled to fly at night without lights. So let's face the facts: The collision is tied by its umbilical cord to our presence in Lebanon. The question is only what this means.

Fifteen years ago, when a poorly built structure in Tyre, Lebanon, collapsed and buried under its debris scores of IDF troops, a sobering Israel fathomed the meaning of an odyssey which had led it far beyond the horizon, all the way to the roof of a tall building that had no foundations.

By the same token, this week's symbolism may be that when it comes to Lebanon, our leaders - like those light-less choppers - are groping in the dark.

Clearly, some of that 1967 conviction, i.e. that we know what we want and that our enemies have no moral case, is missing. Yes, all of us want a peaceful northern border, but the security zone has already allowed - if not caused - the deaths of hundreds of Israelis; and yes, we have damn good reasons for camping in Lebanon, but while at it we provide our enemies with the pretext to challenge us as admirable freedom-fighting guerrillas.

This is not to suggest that the

collective grief we are going through right now should necessarily lead us to abandon Lebanon. But it must instigate us to re-explore our aims in Lebanon.

FIRST, WE must decide how to view Syria's occupation of Lebanon. If we are opposed to it, then our diplomacy must assault Syria's unabashed dismemberment of Lebanon, a founding member of the United Nations which deserves from the free world at least the same empathy and assistance that Kuwait received after its invasion by Iraq.

But even if we choose to accept its disappearance as a sovereign state, we must verify what kind of Lebanon would be one tolerable for us.

To be sure, what Syria is seeking in Lebanon is what Mao's China sought in Hong Kong, and what Hitler's Germany saw in Switzerland, and what the USSR found in Finland and Austria, namely militarily toothless capitalistic powerhouses which provided the deformed economies of their dictatorial neighbors an indispensable financial safety valve.

Unlike Jerusalem, Damascus has very clear aims in Lebanon: Economically, it is turning Lebanon into its private engine, by allowing Beirut to attract foreign investments, launch huge construction projects and reopen its financial markets.

At home, meanwhile, Syria continues to obstruct private enterprise, by placing most of the economy in the hands of assorted clan-dominated state companies, while demanding entrepreneurs obtain licenses for nearly anything they

do, even operating fax machines or modern lines, which - it goes without saying - are wiretapped. In southern Lebanon, at the same time, Syria encourages a theater of belligerence which constantly bludgeons us.

And so, Assad ends up enjoying the best of all worlds. His 20% unemployed, 35% illiterate workforce spits out an estimated 500,000 mental laborers into a newly bustling Lebanon, while down south he is running a little war against Israel, at no tangible cost from his viewpoint.

In sum, the Lebanese theater unveils that same Assad who even after the end of the Cold War and the sealing of Israel-PLO pacts wouldn't ink a peace deal with someone as forthcoming as Shimon Peres, or even bring himself to condemn bus bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

This can no longer continue. As long as things are the way they are, Israel must define Assad and his Lebanese designs as strategic liabilities. Even a moderate like Labor MK Yossi Beilin echoed this attitude in the past, when he said that Assad had yet to take a strategic decision to make peace with Israel.

In fact, Assad has time and again proven to lack the kind of vision possessed by some of his Arab counterparts. First, he failed to see what Sadat saw, and clung on to the USSR's drying nipples, then he failed to join the Camp David process, and now - in sharp contrast to President Mubarak and King Hussein - he refuses to open up his country economically, or even inaugurate a stock market in Damascus. And he thinks he can

A curse called Lebanon

Dry Bones



FUNDS



By BEVERLEE BLACK

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A VIEW FROM NOV



By MOSHE KOHN

"aliya" - ascent; denoting the return of Jews to Eretz Yisrael. "oleh/olah, olim/olim": Jews thus ascending. "ha'pala": determined, daring ascent; denoting the "illegal" aliya into Mandatory Palestine. "ma'pilim": "illegal" olim.

"This road, captain, has no name, / At Lloyd's they know nothing of it. / But if the maps haven't yet charted it, / Perhaps the history books will record it."

So wrote poet Natan Alterman in his "Address in Response to An Italian Sea Captain After a Night of Unloading."

That poem is a paean to a certain Captain Enseado who, on the night of December 25, 1945, landed the ship *Hanna Szenes* off Nahariya and helped bring ashore its cargo of 252 of what the British occupiers of Eretz Yisrael called "illegal immigrants," *ma'pilim* in the Jewish lexicon.

That ship was one of 140-odd vessels that between 1934 - when the Hagana established the Mossad Le'aliya Bet (The Institution for Immigration B, which came to be called simply "The Mossad") - and the reestablishment of the Jewish state in 1948 challenged the British blockade and brought about 140,000 *ma'pilim* to Eretz Yisrael. The poem is also a paean to the

thousands of men and women who led those Jews from all over the European Hell through charted and uncharted routes to seaports, manned the ships that brought them to the home shores, and led or carried them ashore. Those saviors were Jews and non-Jews from many lands - mainly, of course, Palestinians (their designation then still denoted only Eretz Yisrael Jews; the local Arabs still chose to be known as "Southern Syrians").

Alterman promised the captain that long after he had retired he would remember that night, "And we'll tell you then that the gates are open... / And they were opened by this band of lads."

Of that "illegal" fleet Alterman wrote: "This little gray fleet / Will yet be hailed in song and story..." Indeed, Jon and David Kimche write in their *The Secret Roads* that British rule in Eretz Yisrael was broken "...by the almost despised illegal immigrant. He - and the men and women, who brought him - had undermined the moral claim of the British to rule in Palestine, and this was the root of all that followed..."

That "band of lads" included some 250 North American and a few Latin American and other volunteers who manned 10 "illegal" ships (some were actually no more than boats) bought in the US and Canada with money raised there. These vessels carried 32,102 "illegals" out of the 69,653 World War II survivors who had been smuggled across border after border in Europe to ports from where they sailed to Eretz Yisrael.

THERE HAD been *ha'pala* since 1882, when the Ottoman authorities prohibited Eastern European Jews (with rare exceptions) from settling

here. Nevertheless, many thousands infiltrated.

Incidentally, the Ottomans didn't call Eretz Yisrael "Palestine," but referred to different sections of it by the respective names of the administrative or military districts into which they divided the region, including also Sinai and what are today Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. In the second half of the 19th century, Western Eretz Yisrael consisted of the sanjaks of Jerusalem, Nablus and Acre and part of the sanjak of Beirut, all four of which comprised the vilayet of Beirut, embracing present-day Lebanon.

Between December 1917, when the British conquered the country from the Ottomans, and 1922, the year the British officially assumed the League of Nations mandate, there were several periods when Jews could freely enter the country, and several when the authorities sought to appease the local Arabs by banning or severely curtailing Jewish immigration.

In 1922, the British launched their policy of severely restricting Jewish settlement. Yet more than 8,000 *ma'pilim* entered the country between then and 1934. Many were smuggled in via Lebanon by members of the Rosh Pina Betar, the Revisionist youth organization, and Brit Hahibryonim, the radical Revisionist wing.

In 1934, just after the Nazis came to power in Germany and the situation of Eastern European Jewry, too, was becoming critical, the Hagana founded the "illegal immigration" organization *Hamosad Le'aliya Bet*, as distinguished from *Aliya Alef/A*, the official aliya under the British immigration "schedule."

The first Mossad ship, the *Velos I*,

brought 350 olim in July 1934, landing them near Tel Aviv.

In August, the Revisionists similarly brought 117 olim on the *Union*. The Mossad, the Revisionists and other groups brought another 73 shiploads of *ma'pilim* by August 28, 1945, when the first post-war *Aliya Bet* vessel, *Dalim*, landed 35 *ma'pilim* at Caesarea. By the end of that year only eight vessels arrived, with a total of 1,032 *ma'pilim*.

In Europe, the situation of the Jewish displaced persons was desperate; in Eretz Yisrael, the British were intensifying their efforts to keep the Jews out.

The Jewish Agency and the Hagana swung into action in North America. With the help of a group of Jews known as the "Somebom Club," they started buying ships and recruiting volunteers to step up the *ha'pala*.

The first two vessels thus bought and named were Canadian corvettes, which were converted for their new task. One was named the *Josiah Wedgwood* and carried 1,257 *ma'pilim*, whom the British promptly interned in the Adit detention camp. The other, the *Hagana*, made two voyages, bringing a total of 3,677 *ma'pilim*.

The vicissitudes of both ships and the *Hagana*'s first voyage are sympathetically recorded in the 1946 classic, *Underground to Palestine*, written by that great journalist and publicist, LF Stone, before he became a bitter critic of Israel. He helped the *Wedgwood* to elude the British in Italy, and he sailed with the *Hagana*.

Stone concludes the book with the declaration, "If those ships are illegal, so was the Boston Tea Party."

The saga of all 10 North American

ships, including the immortal *Exodus*, and of the volunteers was generally unknown until it was beautifully summarized in the 1987 book, *The Jews' Secret Fleet* by Joseph Hochstein and Murray S. Greenfield, the latter having served aboard one of them, the *Haikva*. Issued by Gefen of Jerusalem and New York and in Hebrew translation (*Hatzi Hasodi Shel Hayehudim*) by the Defense Ministry, it has an introduction by Prof. Sir Martin Gilbert, Winston Churchill's official biographer, and a foreword by one of those volunteers, Paul Shulman, a graduate of the US Naval Academy at Annapolis and World War II combat veteran, who was the Israel Navy's founder and first commander.

Dr. Aviva Halamish of the Open University and Tel Aviv University treats an aspect of that saga in her essay, "American Volunteers in Illegal Immigration to Palestine, 1946-1948" (*Jewish History*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring 1995, published by Haifa University and the New England University Press). She also devotes a chapter to the North American volunteers in her forthcoming book on the saga of the *Exodus*.

Leonard Slater tells the story of the "Somebom Club" in gripping detail in his *The Pledge* (New York, Simon & Schuster).

Meyer Levin's pioneering 1947 film classic, *The Illegals*, documents the winter trek through several European countries and the voyage to Haifa of 850 *ma'pilim* aboard the *Lo Tefhidumu Unefraid*.

(Special thanks to Murray Greenfield. The free translation of the passages from Natan Alterman's poem is my own.)

We will do and we will obey

Moses is commanded, along with Aaron, his two sons Nadab and Abihu, and the 70 elders of Israel, to come up to God. But only Moses is to come near the mountain itself. What follows is a description of the steps involved in ratifying the Book of the Covenant (*Sefer Habrit*) with the Blood of the Covenant.

Returning to the people, Moses reads the civil laws and criminal laws of *Mishpatim*. In response to hearing the laws, the people declare: "We will do" (24:3).

This agreement paves the way for the next step, writing down what has just been read aloud. Afterward, Moses builds an altar, and burnt offerings and peace offerings are sacrificed. The blood is collected, half placed in bowls and half sprinkled on the altar. Then Moses reads from the newly written version, which the Torah calls *Sefer Habrit*. Upon hearing it again, the nation repeats the previous declaration, "We will do" (*na'aseh*), but this time adds, "We will obey" (*v'nishma*). With this second declaration, Moses takes the other half of the blood and sprinkles it upon the nation, declaring: "This is the blood of the covenant, which God had made with you in agreement with all these words" (Ex. 24:8).

According to talmudist Rabbi Yitzhak Huter, author of the *Pahad Yitzhak*, sprinkling the blood on the altar and the people are symbolic expressions for the laws between man and man, and the laws between man and God. And if we keep this concept in mind, Rashi's comment on the verse, "And Moses took half the blood and put it into large bowls, the other half he sprinkled on the altar" is revealing. Quoting the midrash, Rashi writes: "Who divided it? An angel divided it" (Midrash Rabba on Lev. 6:5).

Why do we have to introduce a divine element to the act of pouring half the contents of one jar or bowl into another? Are we being told that achieving an exact, mathematically accurate division is impossible?

But if that were the case, how do we explain that at the earlier covenant of the Pact Between the Halves between God and Abraham, when Abraham divides the animals that he was commanded to sacrifice, an angel doesn't appear to make sure the division is accurate.

Clearly then, if the division in our portion is being done by an angel, it implies that the splitting of the blood exactly in half is crucial to an understanding of the nature of the first

post-Sinai covenant. If the blood on the altar and the blood on the people represents these two different aspects of relating to the world - as Rabbi Yitzhak Huter explains - this would explain Rashi's comment that the division cannot be achieved without angelic intervention. The two are equally important; the division must be exact, impossible to achieve if a human measured it.

Textual evidence that this covenant focuses on establishing the "divine" equality of the laws between man and man, and the laws between man and God, can be discerned from how the commandments are given in *Parashat Yitro*. The ultimately transcendent encounter between man and the Divine lead directly into the laws of civil and criminal legislation.

The portion of *Yitro* concludes with Moses being commanded to build an altar. Then we come to our portion of *Mishpatim*, in which all the laws between man and man are presented. The Torah seems to say that man may have encountered God directly on Sinai, but after the thunder and lightning are just a memory, the laws of torts and damages still have to be dealt with. And upon completing the presentation of these

laws, Moses actually builds the altar and presents the burnt offerings and peace offerings that he was commanded to do in *Yitro* (Ex. 20:21).

Just as what occurred on Sinai and what happens in our portion of *Mishpatim* is linked by this altar, sprinkling half the blood on the altar and half on the people tells us the transcendent experience on Sinai (laws between man and God) and the legislative experience of *Mishpatim* (laws between man and man) are equal. Alternately, a second way to look upon the splitting of the blood is to see it as a way of telling us that achieving the ideal society as presented in the Book of the Covenant requires God and the nation of Israel to work together.

Furthermore, since this covenant emerges directly from the Ten Commandments and laws of *Mishpatim*, we are being warned not to fall into the trap of believing either that everything is in our hands, and nothing is God's; or vice-versa.

Since we know that half of the blood was spilled on the people, not a drop more, it is impossible for us to do it on our own. We need God, but this particular covenant stresses the absolute equality of the enterprise.

Shabbat Shalom

SHABBAT SHALOM



By SHLOMO RUSKH

RASHI explains that just as the Ten Commandments (last week's portion) were revealed on Sinai, so too the civil and criminal legislation that comprise this week's portion of *Mishpatim* are from Sinai. Thus, when a person transgresses against another, it's as if it is against God.

The tension between the ethical and ritualistic laws not only divides the religious and non-religious worlds, but even within religious society there are those who tend to devote most of their energy toward ritual observance, while others choose instead to concentrate on ethical and moral practices.

I believe that a comment by Rashi addresses this issue directly, and provides a fascinating door into understanding the nature of these two areas of human endeavor.

After the extensive details devoted to civil and criminal legislation,

GRAPEVINE

She could have danced all night

By GREER FAY CASHMAN

It takes a lot of courage for a non-professional to dance across the stage of the Tel Aviv Center for the Performing Arts, but when Ya'acov Mazar, husband of Tel Aviv city councilwoman Miki Mazar, held out his hand to Ludmilla Tichon, the wife of Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon, she could hardly refuse. In fact they were the first couple of only a handful to allow the music to get to their feet. The occasion was a NIS 500 a plate, on-stage banquet as a kick-off to the fund-raising activities of Li-Lach, the women's voluntary association which operates children's club houses and assists single-parent families, new immigrants, the elderly and ex-convents in the greater Tel Aviv area.

Dalia and Avi Pelosof, Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav, Elisheva Milo, representing her husband Mayor Roni Milo, who had other commitments, hotelier Ami Federman, car importers Rachel and Rami Ungar, and Korean ambassador to Israel Dongsoon Park, who is winding up his three-year term. Park's wife Eun-Joo and members of the embassy staff stood out in their colorful national costumes which contrasted strongly with the black suits and dresses worn by the overwhelming majority of the guests.

ALTHOUGH SHE stumbled over a word or two, Maatchen Land, the vivacious wife of South African ambassador Frank Land, acquitted herself beyond her own expectations when she delivered a welcoming speech in Hebrew at a brunch in her Ramat Gan home. Repeating her greetings in English, she said that she would spare guests all of the 11 official languages of South Africa. Everyone present received a multi-colored beaded brooch, which Land described as "a symbol of the new South Africa, which means together we can make a difference."

Most of the women were so impressed that they immediately pinned the brooches to their suit jackets. Aside from diplomatic wives, guests included international matchmaker Helena



Ludmilla Tichon and Ya'acov Mazar glide to the music at the "on-stage" fundraiser for Li-Lach. (Paz Bar)

Amram, fashion-show moderator of the International Women's Club, and modeling-school proprietor Ilana Margalit, Esther Lucas of the cosmetic treatments cen-

ter at the Dan Panorama, and Eileen Finkelstein, the recently elected chairperson of Beit Protea, the Herzliya retirement home for former South Africans.

ALTHOUGH HE'S the master of all he surveys at Jerusalem's Renaissance hotel, where he is the representative for the owners, Harvey Douglan actually prefers being in other hotels. Why? "If something goes wrong," he explains, "I can always say thank goodness, this wasn't in my hotel." But if truth be told, Douglan would rather be home with his PC. Absolutely hooked on surfing the Internet, he gets withdrawal symptoms when he's away for too long.

DUE TO be a daddy by the end of the month, Michael Jackson is taking his impending fatherhood very seriously and has already invested a million dollars in sprucing up the baby's room in a 15th-century French castle. Jackson Jr. is also going to have a super-special nanny. Papa Michael is so particular about who's going to be an influential factor in his baby's life that he has interviewed over a hundred candidates. He's also going to fork out another million dollars to a Japanese plastic surgeon who's going to give him a more manly appearance which will make him look more like a real dad.

SHARING THE spotlight with Madonna certainly gave Antonio Banderas a claim to fame. But he's not quite well known enough to have ordinary mortals fawning at his feet. Case in point was when he attended one of the many gala screenings of *Evita*. Banderas made the mistake of going out into the foyer for a smoke. But when he wanted to go back inside the usher refused to believe that he and the man on the screen were one and the same, and wouldn't let him past the door.

TALK ABOUT a global village. The bride, supermodel Naomi Campbell, comes from Britain, the Italian groom Luca Orlandi owns fashion boutiques in New York, and the couple, who met seven months ago, where else but at a fashion show, are planning a July wedding in Paris with hundreds of guests from all over the world.

THE WEEK THAT WAS

The avengers ride into battle with the media

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

After skirmishes with the military establishment, the justice system and the police, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his trusty warriors have now girded their loins to battle the media - or "The Media" as the collective entity becomes when they utter it.

In fact, the Netanyahu camp, officered by Prime Minister's Office director-general Avigdor Lieberman, has engaged the media in a running battle since before the election.

After a brief period of relative disengagement, the Deri/Bar-On/Hebron scandal as reported by Channel 1 triggered off a renewed onslaught from the ramparts of the Prime Minister's Office. The campaign continued over the weekend in Davos, Switzerland, in between luxury dinners and ponderous summit meetings. Netanyahu made full use of the television cameras and radio mikes to vent his complaints against the media.

The Israeli media played along with the game like a mouse mesmerized by the python that's about to crush it. They covered every trivial aspect of the trip, from Bibi wining and dining to Bibi falling off skis. Mercifully, there appeared to be no camels in Davos!

Taking his cue from Netanyahu and Lieberman, Shas spiritual mentor Rabbi Ovadia Yosef decided to join the avengers and rescue the lost honor of those slandered in the Deri/Bar-On affair - mainly the "beloved" Aryeh Deri himself, as Yosef called him.

Yosef tagged onto the line of politicians ostensibly boycotting Channel 1 in favor of giving exclusive interviews to Channel 2. "The avengers" happened, by coincidence, to be those in the procession of notables trooping off to police headquarters for questioning this week - Deri, Lieberman, Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi, Likud functionary David Appel and Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert.

But, ha! ha!, they would show that Ayala Hasson (who broke the Bar-On story) and they would teach that Rafik Halaby (Channel 1 news director) a lesson. They would deprive them of their lofty views. In fact, as public figures, they were doing a disservice to all television viewers. In a democracy those are the ones who dutifully pay TV taxes and are entitled to the most comprehensive news coverage the only public broadcasting network in the country can provide. That doesn't mean just the coverage that pleases a gaggle of peeved and dubious politicians.



Rabbi Yosef decided to join 'the avengers.' (Isaac Harari)



Interior Minister Suissa discovered some enlightening facts about summertime. (Harari)

already had promised Netanyahu firmly that Shas was behind the agreement? So who is lying? Yosef? Deri? Channel 1's political commentator Yaron Dekel wondered if it was all another media manipulation on Netanyahu's part to pressure Yasser Arafat.

And who told us who is Hasson's "deep throat"? Is it a police source as Deri suggested? Is it Avi-Yitzhak, as politicians suggested? Is it Hanegbi, as a reliable source suggested? Confused? Don't worry, it gets worse. "Oh what a tangled web we weave..." and the rest rhymes with "deceive." Stay tuned for next week's episode.

SHADY TIME

Israel has a longer, hotter summer than our neighbors in Europe. Yet instead of enjoying longer daylight hours Israelis seem fated to rise when the sun is already beating down and spend the balmy summer evenings in darkness.

It's all because Shas is intent on scoring yet another political point by shortening daylight-saving time from last year's 185 days to this year's planned 175 days, and next year's 145 days. Whither next - 145 days? After Shas quit Yitzhak Rabin's government, former interior minister Ehud Barak bumped summer time to 185 days in 1996 with a promise to stretch it to a realistic 222 days. This would have extended daylight saving time to October 31, in step with the European Union.

Interior Minister Eli Suissa, of Shas, it was revealed this week, has been sitting on a survey conducted for the Knesset Interior Committee last year.

The survey, done by Teleset, revealed that a large majority of Jewish society, including the religious and even haredi sectors, favor longer-summer daylight. And why not - most of the world likes long summer evenings after work to spend with the family and friends while the children play or finish their homework in daylight.

Only in the haredi sector was there close to a balance between those for and against longer daylight saving.

All other research and experience has shown that working in the earlier, cooler morning hours saves the economy millions of shekels in lighting and air conditioning, increases productivity, and lowers the traffic accident rate.

Yet haredim insist that summer time ends before the pre-High Holy Day daily penitentiary prayers, saying it forces them to rise earlier for prayers and leaves insufficient time to pray before work.

Reason would suggest that if they get up earlier to pray, they would start work earlier too, and finish it sooner to be with their families.

Apparently not - or rather, apparently that's not the point. As Ha'aretz economic editor Nehemia Strasser said: "The haredi war is political in essence. They want to prove that they are stronger than their [Lach] predecessors Ehud Barak and Haim Ramon. They will shorten daylight saving, as even if it doesn't serve the interests of their own people."

PLOT THICKENER

Now what really happened in the Deri/Bar-On/Hebron affair? This was being asked, as is their right, by everyone from this column's hairdresser to the violinist on Dizengoff Street. The more people the police question, the more confusing it all becomes. So what do we have so far? Appel is a party hack who clearly has no business whatsoever being involved in the appointment of the state's attorney-general. He does not deny discussing Bar-On's candidacy with Deri. He even bragged that had he wanted the appointment to go through, "it would have worked like a Swiss clock." (Maybe he meant like a Swiss bank account.) Appel also said he saw the shortlist of candidates and decided Dan Avi-Yitzhak was no good for the post.

Deri - a man, let us recall, who is on lengthy trial for criminal offenses - admits nixing the appointment of his own attorney, Avi-Yitzhak, who was also Netanyahu's preferred candidate, in favor of Bar-On.

Deri and Appel were questioned at the same time to prevent them from coordinating their testimonies, police gravely informed us. (What was to prevent them from rehearsing a joint story, if necessary, before attending the scheduled questioning?) The police know someone lied to them during the investigation and that attempts have been made to disrupt the inquiry. They say there are grounds to continue their probe though not on the same road as the Channel 1 story took.

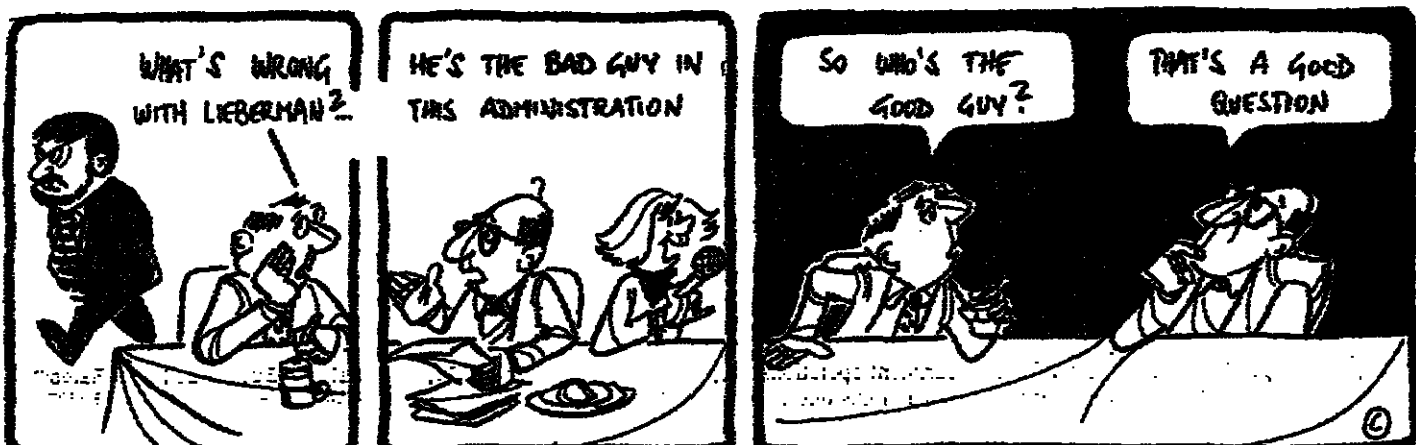
Rabbi Ovadia Yosef says it was he who told Deri to sabotage the Avi-Yitzhak appointment.

Yosef also said Shas had made it clear to Netanyahu weeks earlier that it supported the Hebron agreement unconditionally. What then was the meaning of a statement two days before the cabinet vote on the agreement, by Yehuda Avidan, Deri's own assistant, saying Shas had not yet decided whether to support it or not?

A reminder here - according to Hasson's story on Channel 1, Deri was threatening to block the Hebron agreement unless Bar-On was appointed attorney-general. How could he do that if Yosef

BRULIK

by DOSH



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

ACROSS

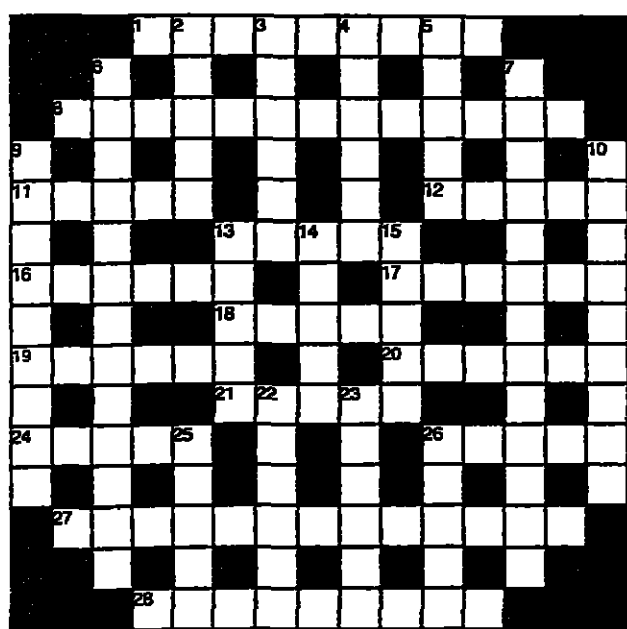
- 1 Understand new paper that leads to hospital closure (9)
- 8 Build-up of people in favour of time-share? (13)
- 11 Blackguard has to go back in regret (5)
- 12 Torrid at the Spanish watering-hole (5)
- 13 Low sound to develop at length (5)
- 16 Clumsily sat on a piece of piano-music (6)
- 17 Run rings round chump at Oxford University (6)
- 18 Prime cheese set before female (5)
- 19 Cubist roughly depicting small restaurant (6)
- 20 Hide paintings of military display? (6)

DOWN

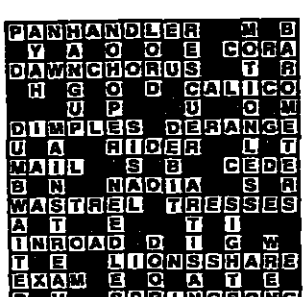
- 2 Vehemently deny England's opener is poor! (5)
- 24 Women warm up cereal (5)
- 26 Greet tanned bird on the shore (5)
- 27 Half the doings disguised in this stagecraft (7,2,4)
- 28 Senior civil servant close a line? (9)
- 3 Right behind 15 beam (6)
- 4 Henry quarrel in school? (6)
- 5 Mark in the nick (5)
- 6 Hang back purposely in enlarged shoes, repaired (4,4,5)

7 Gourmet with an alternative that is most appetizing (13)

- 9 Old weapons put out over ships' stems (8)
- 10 Do they provide river digs of the lighter kind? (9)
- 13 Where Africans continue to gossip (5)
- 14 Oil-producer has nothing pressing (5)
- 15 High unknown quantity below roof-space (5)
- 22 One in three, perhaps? No, two! (6)
- 23 Canoe revealed by archaeologist? (6)
- 25 Fierce argument dropping returning aid to the clan (5)
- 26 Sheer variety here in Surrey (5)



SOLUTIONS



Yesterday's Quick Solution
ACROSS: 7 Sirius, 8 Stepps, 10 Anquish, 11 Parze, 12 Lona, 13 Trunk, 17 Theb, 18 Lona, 23 Quota, 23 Luggaga, 24 Infocm, 25 Corcia.
DOWN: 1 Assanit, 2 Brigand, 3 Cupid, 4 Shipend, 5 Spira, 6 Jewel, 9 Shortfall, 14 Theatre, 15 Nomadic, 16 Lovaret, 19 Equip, 20 Corfa, 21 Agree.

QUICK CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Region of N France (7)
- 5 One cubic decimetre (5)
- 8 River-nymph (5)
- 9 Liverpool racecourse (7)
- 10 Warm and friendly (7)
- 11 Brilliant success (5)
- 12 Most excellent (6)
- 14 Coma, torpor (6)
- 17 City in N Italy (5)
- 19 Dance (7)
- 22 Smallpox (7)
- 23 Aquatic bird (5)
- 24 Out of bed (5)
- 25 Sovereignty (7)

DOWN

- 1 Great alarm (5)
- 2 Twitter (7)
- 3 Spokes (5)
- 4 Annually (6)
- 5 Clement (7)
- 6 Province of W Austria (5)
- 7 Voter (7)
- 12 Russian tea-wm (7)
- 13 Dilapidated (3-4)
- 15 Sunshade (7)
- 16 Weaken in strength (6)
- 18 Frolics, capers (5)
- 20 Monetary unit of Poland (5)
- 21 Relieve, assuage (5)

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THURSDAY MARCH 6

A DAY LIKE NO OTHER
Israel is not associated with heavy industry, and yet... This tour will visit the Haifa Bay, including the Oil Refineries, the Kibbutz Alumina Works, the shipyards, workshops and navy base, plus a boat tour of the bay. We bet you've never seen this part of Israel.
NIS 190 (including lunch)
Tour guide: Dr. Yoash Zohar

MONDAY MARCH 17

LAND OF MILK AND HONEY
Cheese, honey, olive oil and wine - we'll taste them all on our way. We'll start at the organic dairy of Kibbutz, and continue on to the olive oil press at the Druze village of Yanuhah, then the prize-winning Dalton winery. We'll also visit the bee hives of Shadmet Dvora and its silk production unit. The Galilee is especially beautiful at this time of the year. Join us!
NIS 215 (including lunch)
Tour guide: Israel Shalev

TUESDAY MARCH 25

IRISES ARE BLOOMING IN GILBOA
Every year in March it happens. Irises cover Mt. Gilboa. They are the largest, most beautiful and colorful, and some are yellow. We'll visit Nahal Tost on the trail of lupins, the "Cyclamen Hill" of Gilad and Givat Hamoreh. Lunch at Kibbutz Tirat Zvi.
NIS 185 (including lunch)
Tour guide: Hagar Leshner

THURSDAY APRIL 3

ACRE - THE CRUSADER CITY
In July 1099, after they had captured Jerusalem, the Crusaders realized they needed a port with a major harbor. So they turned this small city into an important Crusader stronghold. The markets filled with goods, cloth, jewels and precious stones, for the troops to take home as souvenirs. We'll visit the Hospitallers Quarter and view the new discoveries, the Genoa Quarter - little Italy in the Holy Land, the Templars Quarter, the Turkish Baths and more.
NIS 175
Tour guide: Danny Syon

THURSDAY APRIL 24

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE SANHEDRIN
The Bar-Kochba Revolt failed. 600,000 Jews died. Jerusalem was destroyed. Jews were sold as slaves, and Tora study came to an end. But a new center arose in the Galilee, and the towns of Zippori and Tiberias became famous. We'll visit them, as well as Beit Shearim, the burial place of Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi and his family.
NIS 215 (including lunch)
Tour guide: Danny Weiss

The tour price includes transportation from Jerusalem or Tel Aviv and return, entrance to all sites, background lectures and on-the-spot explanations. Lunch as indicated. 10% off when you book all five tours. Pick-up and drop-off along the route when possible and arranged beforehand.

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CORRECTION

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BITS & BYTES

By JENNIFER FRIEDMAN

Foxcom receives \$3m. investment: Apex Partners, a \$40m. venture-capital fund, has decided to invest \$3m. in Foxcom, a Jerusalem-based maker of fiber optic solutions for the communications industry. The company said the investment will go to developing innovative cellular communications products. Apex Partners, which invests in high-tech, industrial and service companies, is part of Apex International. The parent company has \$2b. worth of investments in 200 American, German, British and French companies.

Green College to offer computer courses: Green College, a member of the Green Computers group, is offering two computer courses: an introductory class in animation and 3-D and a PC graphics course. Green College promises to help people who take the courses to find jobs in the computer field. To find out more about the classes, which begin February 24, 1997, call 177-022-1993.

Indigo and the Cerruti Group sign partnership agreement: Indigo N.V. (Nasdaq: INDGPF), a Netherlands-based company that produces its upscale printing systems in Israel, has announced a strategic partnership agreement with the Cerruti group. Under the terms of the agreement, the Cerruti Group, a privately held company that has been operating in the printing field since 1947, will distribute and market Indigo's digital Omnibus One-Shot Color printers. The Omnibus One-Shot Color system employs ElectroInk, a new ink product for background printing on transparent substrates.

Magic receives \$500,000 in new orders: Magic Software Enterprises (Nasdaq: MGICF) of Irvine, California recently announced two new contracts with leading newspaper and magazine distributors in the UK. John Menzies and W.H. Smith News will integrate "Magic" as the development tool for their operational systems. The contracts will contribute \$500,000 to fourth-quarter revenues. The company develops, publishes and markets Magic, a table-driven, cross-platform rapid application development system for creating client, server and Internet-based solutions. Mashov Computers of Or Yehuda holds 51% of Magic, which Mashov spun off in 1991.

Memo and GTE sign \$1m. deal: Under the terms of a recently signed deal, Memco Software (Nasdaq: MEMCF) of Tel Aviv will sell GTE, an American telecommunications company, more than \$1m. worth of additional copies of Memco's SeOS information-security suite of products. The deal brings the worth of their business relationship to over \$3m. GTE is one of the largest publicly held telecommunications companies in the world.

Orkit wins Telecom Eireann tender for supply of HDSL modems: Orkit Communications Ltd. (Nasdaq: ORCIF) of Tel Aviv, recently won a tender to supply its CopperTrunkOE ORcom and ORrack HDSL (high bit rate digital subscriber line) modems directly to Telecom Eireann, the national telephone operating company of Ireland. HDSL enables bi-directional data transmission of 2 Mbps over existing copper telephone wires. This allows telecom operators to offer high speed data services without incurring a costly infrastructure investment. Orkit currently supplies its HDSL modems to customers in Europe, Israel, Africa, the Far East and Central and South America.

OTI and Japan's CSK Group sign joint venture deal: Smartcard developer On Track (OTI), of Rosh Pina, has signed a strategic partnership with the Japanese CSK Group, the world's largest information services company, whose holdings include Sega Enterprises. According to the agreement, OTI will invest \$2m. to establish a subsidiary in Japan. The company will distribute a series of smartcards, including electronic purses and public transportation cards. CSK's subsidiaries and OTI, one of the four leading smartcard makers worldwide, will work together on a number of projects.

RadVision and Netscape sign licensing agreement: RadVision of Tel Aviv and California-based Netscape Communications Corporation (Nasdaq: NSCP) recently announced that Netscape has licensed software from RADVision to implement the standard H.323 protocol in Netscape Conference software. Netscape Conference, which allows users to speak and be heard simultaneously, is the real-time collaboration component of Netscape Communicator, an integrated client software suite allowing users to communicate, access and share information on Intranets and the Internet.

Siemens-Nixdorf to incorporate Intel's MMX technology in its PCs: Siemens-Nixdorf, the computer division of Germany's Siemens AG, will incorporate Intel's MMX technology in its personal computers. Pentium MMX technology, which was developed by Intel's Israel subsidiary, is said to operate 20 to 40 times faster than conventional pentium processors.

Analysts: TASE to be tested by share offers

By GALIT LIPKIS BECK

The long-term resilience of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange's newly bullish trading will be put to the test with the government's imminent offering of 17 percent of Bank Discount's shares, capital market analysts said yesterday.

Since the start of the year, the share market has appreciated more than 25%, following more than two years of a bear market marked by low turnovers and the near disappearance of new issues on the TASE. As a result, Israeli companies have sought alternative methods of financing, mainly public offerings on US equity markets.

However, the government intends to raise NIS 170 million initially from the sale of the country's third largest bank on the TASE later this month. The success or failure of the issue is significant considering the last few months' standstill in the banking sector's privatization process, but it is also an important indication of whether issues can be made on the TASE, analysts said.

The positive trend of the share market is encouraging many local firms - especially companies engaged in industry, commerce and real estate - to consider the TASE as a source of financing.

instead of going overseas, said David Weisberg, general manager of IBI Brokerage House.

"Underwriters are waiting for a signal. They want to see if Bank Discount's offering will be absorbed by the market," Weisberg said.

The outcome of Bank Discount's offering will be determined by the public's willingness to invest in the TASE, as well as the stock's sale price, which will have to be attractive, said Yair Lapidot, general manager of National Consultants. Current trading volumes are still relatively low compared with the peaks of 1993, Lapidot said. The public, he concluded, has yet to return to the market.

"There is a problem with the financial institutions. It is not yet clear what is happening with them," Lapidot said, explaining that the mutual funds need an injection of new capital from the public in order to raise financing to participate in the offering.

The provident funds, he said, are interested in maintaining reserve liquid assets in fear that they will find themselves in the same situation as last year, when they suffered from a wave of redemptions from the public. Assuming Bank Discount's

shares are offered at an attractive price, Lapidot forecasts the institutions may decide to engage in "arbitrage" as a method of buying Discount shares.

While analysts define the last few months' performance of the market as "bullish," the majority agree that daily increases of 2%-4% in share values are unhealthy for the market.

Most analysts attribute the market's recent resurgence to the recovery of the peace process, which has helped restore foreign investors' confidence in the local market.

"Companies' yields can not justify these kind of gains. I think the share market can continue to go up at a very high rate and could even appreciate by 30% by the end of the year, but this is not recommended since it could be followed by a sharp drop in prices," said Doron Zur, an analyst at Sahar Securities.

Commenting on the US market, analysts said they expect the local high-tech sector to continue raising capital overseas.

"The high-tech companies receive higher valuations in the US, since Wall Street investors are willing to put more money at risk in companies of this kind," said Jonathan Half, vice president of Oscar Gruss.

Knesset finance panel OK's Discount share offering

By EVELYN GORDON

The Knesset Finance Committee yesterday approved the sale of 17 percent of Bank Discount on the stock exchange.

The offering, which the Treasury expects to raise some NIS 600 million, will consist of packages including shares plus two sets of options - the first redeemable three months after the issue and the second redeemable after nine months.

The Treasury said it expects to collect some 28% of the total value of the offering immediately, another 32% when the first set of options is redeemed and the remaining 40% when the final set of options is redeemed. The offering is expected to cost the Treasury 1.8% of its total value, or about NIS 10.8 million.

Sixty percent of the issue will be

offered in advance to institutional investors, and another 10% will be offered to Discount employees. Since Discount shares already are traded on the stock exchange, the price of each part of the package will be set according to the trading price of Discount shares at that time.

The offering will be managed by a consortium of 30 to 50 underwriters, led by IBI, Eyal, Leader and Clal Issuing. At the Bank of Israel's orders, no banks will be included in the underwriting consortium, the Treasury said.

The shares which will be offered to Discount's 6,500 employees will be priced at 25% less than the general offering. Each worker will be entitled to buy an amount equal to 90% of his monthly salary, but will have to hold on to the shares for at least four years.

US aid to Israel intact under 1998 budget proposal

By HILLEL KUTTLER

WASHINGTON - Israel will continue receiving \$3 billion in annual assistance under the budget proposal President Bill Clinton presented to Congress yesterday. The president's \$1.7 trillion budget for fiscal year 1998 maintains the Israeli aid package of \$1b. in military assistance and \$1.2b. in economic aid. Israel will receive an additional \$80 million to help resettle immigrants.

The budget also provides \$1.2b. and \$815m. in military and economic aid, respectively, to Egypt; \$75m. to the Palestinians; and \$70m. in military and economic aid to Jordan, up from \$40m. in fiscal year 1997.

It further allocates \$52.5m. to seed the Middle East Development Bank, to be based in Cairo; \$12m. to promote Middle East peace talks, and \$2m. to fund the Israel-Lebanon Monitoring Group established when the Operation Grapes of Wrath cease-fire was reached last April.

In all, foreign military and economic aid totals \$13.3b. But congressional Republicans are likely to again

fight the administration's request and seek to further trim foreign aid spending.

Clinton's budget calls for \$19.45b. in diplomatic spending, including for State Department operations, the US Information Agency (USIA) and UN dues.

Last year Clinton asked for \$19.2b. but Congress agreed to just \$18.3b., of which about \$12.3b. was for foreign aid.

Officers of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee are due in town next week and will lobby budget committee members on behalf of the president's funding requests, an official of the group said yesterday.

Clinton's budget proposal cuts taxes for the middle class, provides billions of dollars to upgrade education and health care and still claims balance in 2002.

"I urge Congress to help me finish the job and balance the budget by 2002 - giving the American people the balanced budget they deserve," the president said in his budget message.

The president had promised in his State of the Union address Tuesday to make balancing the budget and improving education his top priorities, and his spending blueprint was designed to carry that out.

ISRAELI MONEY MARKETS				
Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (11.9.96)				
Currency (deposit for)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	
U.S. dollar (\$250,000)	4.750	5.000	5.375	
Pound sterling (£100,000)	3.875	4.000	4.250	
German mark (DM 200,000)	1.825	1.825	2.125	
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.825	0.750	1.000	
Yen (10 million yen)	-	-	-	-

(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)

Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (6.2.97)					
Currency basket	CHECKS AND TRANSFERS		BANKNOTES		Rep. Rate**
	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	
U.S. dollar	3.2890	3.3421	3.23	3.29	3.6307
German mark	1.9824	2.0246	1.95	2.06	2.0097
Pound sterling	5.3826	5.4798	5.30	5.58	5.4438
French franc	0.8934	0.9030	0.58	0.61	0.5956
Japanese yen (100)	2.8992	2.7021	2.81	2.74	2.8536
Dutch florin	1.7738	1.8025	1.74	1.83	1.7894
Swiss franc	2.3073	2.3448	2.26	2.38	2.3277
Swedish krona	0.4448	0.4518	0.43	0.48	0.4495
Norwegian krona	0.5177	0.5158	0.49	0.53	0.5122
Denish lrona	0.5227	0.5312	0.51	0.54	0.5270
Finnish mark	0.6710	0.6819	0.65	0.70	0.6775
Canadian dollar	2.4425	2.4819	2.40	2.52	2.4561
Australian dollar	2.8994	2.948	2.48	2.59	2.5348
S. African rand	0.7381	0.7480	0.66	0.75	0.7429
Belgian franc (10)	0.9658	0.9814	0.84	1.00	0.9736
Austrian schilling (10)	2.3324	2.3781	2.78	2.92	2.8580
Italian lire (1000)	0.0273	0.0260	1.99	2.09	2.0439
Jordanian dinar	4.5700	4.8900	4.57	4.88	4.7158
Egyptian pound	0.9400	1.0200	0.84	1.02	1.0129
ECU	3.8738	3.9381	-	-	3.9060
Irish punt	5.2854	5.3707	5.19	5.45	5.3902
Spanish peseta (100)	2.3558	2.3896	2.31	2.43	2.3755

*These rates vary according to bank. **Bank of Israel.
SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

CORRECTION

The photograph on Page 6 of Wednesday's Money magazine mistakenly featured Eiron Electronic Industries CEO Uzia Galil.

The eight-page New York Times Weekly Review including US and world news and views, business, arts and crossword distributed free with THE JERUSALEM POST every Monday

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ISRAELI SHARES IN NEW YORK

Table with columns: LAST CHANGE, AMEX, NASDAQ. Lists various Israeli companies and their share prices.

Table with columns: LAST CHANGE. Lists various Israeli companies and their share prices.

Table with columns: LAST CHANGE. Lists various Israeli companies and their share prices.

MISHTANIM

Table with columns: LAST CHANGE. Lists various Israeli companies and their share prices.

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Table with columns: LAST CHANGE. Lists various Israeli companies and their share prices.

INTERNATIONAL SHARES

Table with columns: LAST CHANGE. Lists various international companies and their share prices.

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NEW YORK

Table with columns: LAST CHANGE. Lists various New York companies and their share prices.

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TASE ROUNDUP Shares down in tense trade

Shares closed lower yesterday in tense trading, traders said. The Two-Sided Index fell 0.68 percent, or 1.76 points, to 258.19 on all-share turnover of NIS 183 million, against NIS 210m. on Wednesday. The Maof Index closed 0.52% lower at 267.61.

Table with columns: Key Representative Rates, US Dollar, Sterling, Mark. Shows exchange rates for various currencies.

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP Frankfurt, Paris stocks close at new highs

Frankfurt and Paris stocks closed at new highs yesterday as investors bet on a recovery in the German economy. The DAX finished at 3104.14, a modest increase on the day, but eclipsing the previous best set on Wednesday.

Table with columns: FTSE 100, Nikkei, Hang Seng. Shows world market indices.

Table with columns: NYSE STOCKS, Dow Jones, S&P 500. Shows NYSE stock performance.

Table with columns: US COMMODITIES, Gold, Silver. Shows US commodity prices.

Table with columns: LONDON COMMODITIES, Oil, Wheat. Shows London commodity prices.

Table with columns: SPOT MARKET METALS, Gold, Silver. Shows spot market metal prices.

Table with columns: NEW YORK METAL FUTURES, Gold, Silver. Shows New York metal futures prices.

Table with columns: LONDON METAL FINES, Gold, Silver. Shows London metal fines prices.

WALL STREET REPORT Dow rebounds from morning losses

NEW YORK (AP) - Stocks were little changed yesterday, steady from Wednesday's sudden tailspin as investors braced for today's key report on January payroll and wage levels. On Wall Street, the Dow Jones industrial average gained 26.16 points to close at 6,773.06, after slipping to a loss of 33 points in the early afternoon.

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Tired Yeltsin makes brief appearance

MOSCOW (Reuters) - A tired but determined Russian President Boris Yeltsin spoke directly to television cameras briefly yesterday for the first time since falling ill with pneumonia exactly a month ago.

At the start of a Kremlin meeting with the head of the upper house of parliament, Yeltsin, 66, spoke before television cameras for about 45 seconds — the first time he has directly addressed Russian citizens this year.

He spoke slowly to assure elderly Russians they would continue to receive their pensions. He was responding to a proposal by the head of Russia's pension fund that working pensioners should receive a reduction in benefits.

"I can firmly say as president that this will never happen," Yeltsin said. "Pensions for the ordinary pensioner will be preserved today, tomorrow, the day after and as long as we live."

Referring to both houses of parliament and with his voice rising in apparent anger, he said: "Neither the president, nor the government, nor the Federation Council, nor the Duma have even given a thought to this." Yeltsin, who is spending most of his time recovering in an official residence outside Moscow, has visited the Kremlin five times since leaving hospital

on January 20.

He was diagnosed with pneumonia in both lungs on January 6, two months after quintuple heart bypass surgery.

Federation Council Chairman Yegor Stroyev, whose meeting with Yeltsin lasted less than an hour, said Yeltsin was able to work but was still suffering the consequences of pneumonia.

"I last saw Yeltsin after the (heart) operation and now after his flu (pneumonia). Today I saw a president alert, in a working condition, but of course this flu has had its consequences," he told reporters.

During their meeting, the two men also discussed what the Kremlin press office referred to as the "development of the constitutional process."

Stroyev, a former communist who has largely been loyal to Yeltsin as Federation Council speaker, has recently said the Russian constitution — which gives the president overwhelming powers — should be changed to give parliament more influence.

Russia's current constitution was approved by a popular vote after Yeltsin disbanded the former parliament using military force in 1993. It would be extremely difficult to change under the rules for its amendment.

Ecuadoreans tire of 'loco' leader

QUITO (AP) — Ecuadoreans are fed up with the extroverted, jocular president they call *el loco* (the crazy one) and may be ready to throw him out of office.

A day after an estimated 2 million people marched in the streets against Bucaram, Congress was meeting in emergency session yesterday to consider calls for the removal of President Abdala Bucaram.

The opposition called for another massive demonstration outside Congress.

By mid-morning there were no signs of marches in the capital, but Luis Villacis, the strike leader, called for people to gather yesterday evening in a park four blocks from Congress.

Under Ecuadorean law the president can be removed by simple majority vote for "mental incapacity," avoiding the long process of impeachment. Congress could vote to fire Bucaram yesterday, especially if backed by a large chanting crowd outside.

"Yesterday the people expressed their opinion," former President Osvaldo Hurtado said.

Bucaram is being accused of incompetence and corrup-

tion by opposition parties and workers who say he has become a national embarrassment.

His antics include recording a CD called *A Crazy Man Who Loves* and inviting Lorena Bobbitt — an Ecuador-born immigrant to the United States who cut off her husband's penis — to the national palace.

Their frustration spilled over during a nationwide strike Wednesday. Workers, some wearing Bucaram masks, ridiculed their president and said the country's honor was in tatters.

For the second time in two days, Bucaram addressed the nation on television, taking a conciliatory tone and promising to make corrections in his government.

He repeated calls for a "national dialogue" and said the country needed to "calm its passions." Earlier, he had tried to sidestep his detractors this week by announcing he was in favor of the strike. He even declared the strike day a national holiday to allow all state workers to join in.

Cesar Gaviria, president of the Organization of American States, made an urgent trip to the capital, Quito, and said the widespread turmoil was jeopardizing Ecuador's fledgling democracy.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns urged "all Ecuadoreans to refrain from violence" and respect the democratic process.

Yesterday, many stores and businesses reopened, but municipal workers in Quito were given the day off. Schools remain closed today under government order.

The strike originally was called to protest austerity measures that have raised rates for electricity, fuel and telephone service by as much as 300 percent since January.

It soon took on a more personal target.

In the capital, workers chanted "Ole, ole, ole! Thief, thief, thief!" accusing Bucaram of corruption. Police held them back with tear gas. Elsewhere they lit bonfires and tires in the streets. Indians and peasants blocked main highways with rocks and tree trunks.

Stores, businesses and factories around the country were closed after Bucaram ordered a national holiday.

The 44-year-old president took office in August after a campaign that included an outlandish road show featuring him as singer, dancer, comedian and demagogue railing against corruption and injustice.

Rent riots sweep Jo'burg suburbs

JOHANNESBURG (Reuters) - South African police fired rubber bullets and teargas at stone-throwing demonstrators in Johannesburg yesterday as protests about rates payments descended into riot.

Army units were called in to help quell violence reminiscent of street protests that marked the anti-apartheid past but which have been rare in the country's industrial capital since Nelson Mandela became president after all-race elections in 1994.

Witnesses said several people were wounded by rubber bullets and teargas canisters in the clashes, in predominantly colored (mixed-race) southern suburbs between the black township of Soweto and the city's downtown business district.

At least one policeman, wounded in a hail of stones and bottles, was also rushed to hospital, a

police spokesman said.

"People have a right to peaceful protest but when others are intimidated and life and property put at risk, it is our duty to intervene," said Superintendent Govindsamy Mariemuthoo of Soweto police.

"The situation is very volatile and tense. The South African National Defence Force has come in to assist the police in maintaining law and order and removing barricades." Hundreds of chanting residents blocked roads with piles of burning tyres and trash cans, protesting against local council threats to evict those who do not pay for the water and electricity they use, and demanding to pay only a flat rate.

The demonstrations were organized by the largely colored South Western Joint Civics Association, Soweto, which called on people to stay away from work to show support.

O.J. jury urged to impose punitive damages

SANTA MONICA - The jury in O.J. Simpson's civil trial was urged yesterday to punish the former football star by imposing punitive damages for the deaths of his ex-wife and her friend on top of the \$8.5 million they already decided he should pay in compensation.

Daniel Petrocelli, the plaintiffs' lead attorney, told the panel he would put on expert witnesses who would show that "Mr. Simpson has a lot of money, in the neighborhood of many millions of dollars." The jury found Simpson responsible for the deaths of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman, who were killed outside her home on June 12, 1994. He was acquitted on criminal murder charges in 1995.

Petrocelli said Simpson could not be sent to jail for his actions in violating the rights of the victims but he could be forced to pay heavily. "We are not just talking about any violations, we are talking about the most unconscionable violations," he added.

He also said punitive dam-

ages, in addition to punishment, were meant to "set an example to make sure something like this will never happen again."

The compensatory damages are to be shared by Goldman's father, Fred Goldman, and his mother, Sharon Rufo, but any punitive damages would be shared by the heirs of Nicole Brown Simpson — the two young children she had with Simpson — and Ronald Goldman's heirs, who are his father and mother.



O.J. Simpson

Protesting Albanians occupy port city's downtown

VLORE (Reuters) - Tens of thousands of Albanians, blaming the government for collapsed investment schemes, swept aside lines of riot police yesterday to occupy the center of this port city for the second consecutive day.

Up to 30,000 protesters, their numbers swelled throughout the morning by villagers impoverished by the collapsed schemes, poured jubilantly through city streets to Independence Square.

"Vlore is ours, down with the government," the crowd chanted, punching the air and demanding the resignation of President Sali Berisha's right-wing government. "Sali, you thief, where have you put our money?" others shouted.

The protests, sparked by the collapse of one scheme based in the area, engulfed the center of the city most of the week.

Police fought pitched battles with demonstrators down palm-lined boulevards, but twice failed to disperse them.

The interior ministry said three demonstrators and three policemen were injured in Wednesday's clashes. The country's most popular newspaper, Koha Jone, said 20 people were hurt.

Riot policemen told Reuter correspondents at least 25 officers had suffered facial injuries from flying stones.

Several said they were tired of confronting the demonstrators.

Berisha has offered limited help to ruined depositors, particularly those who sold homes to increase their stake. In an interview published yesterday he said his opponents had failed in their aim of turning discontent into a bloodbath.

"The opposition made a big mistake. It wanted a bloodbath and it did not happen," Berisha told the Paris daily *Le Monde*.

"Albania is calm." Women and children led yesterday's ragged procession down streets of the Adriatic port as police moved out of their way.

Some protesters went to a high school and persuaded pupils to leave classrooms and join the rally.

About 10,000 protesters surged to the main police station early in the afternoon and demanded the release of comrades they said had been detained during Wednesday's skirmishes.

"Free our friends," shouted the protesters, massed in the street and on nearby balconies and rooftops.

Turkish forces clash with Greek Cypriots

NICOSIA — Turkish security forces clashed with armed Greek Cypriots yesterday on the border separating the Greek and Turkish communities on this divided island, a Turkish Cypriot news report said.

But the Greek Cypriot government denied there was a shootout.

Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş held Greek Cypriot leader Glafcos Clerides responsible for the incident, alleging the military deliberately staged the incident.

"They were Greek Cypriot soldiers, backed by a machine gun unit," Denktaş was quoted as saying by the TAK news agency.

UN spokesman Waldemar Rokosewski said: "There was a claim by the Turkish army shots were fired by the National Guard. We have no confirmation of this now."

The UNHCR said the agency had had no contact with the four — an expatriate from Nigeria, a Tajik security guard and two Tajik drivers — since they went missing in the centre of the capital with two marked UN cars.

UN military observers based in Tajikistan had reported that the four were captured by the same armed Tajik rebel group that seized four UN military observers — from Austria, Switzerland and Ukraine — as well as two Red Cross workers and four Russian journalists.

The UN observers said the four had been taken to a place called Obigarm in the central Garm valley and about 80 km from Dushanbe in the remote, mountainous Central Asian republic bordering China.

Both the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) said they had stopped work in the former Soviet republic.

Red Cross halts Tajikistan operations

DUSHANBE (Reuters) - The Red Cross said yesterday it had suspended operations in Tajikistan and sent all non-essential staff to neighboring Uzbekistan after four United Nations workers were seized in the capital Dushanbe.

The Red Cross retreat came in response to the kidnapping earlier yesterday of four employees with the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, by unknown assailants.

The UNHCR said the agency had had no contact with the four — an expatriate from Nigeria, a Tajik security guard and two Tajik drivers — since they went missing in the centre of the capital with two marked UN cars.

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PILOTS

Continued from Page 7

with what may be waiting for him around the corner and does not prepare himself for these situations is likely to find himself in these very situations," he said.

"I remember incidents when there was fear before heading out to operational activity, but you learn to overcome it. It is a process that has to be learned like other aspects of flying, but it is more difficult because it touches upon very inner and personal feelings. You have to turn fear into concern because this is an inseparable component of the profession," said Maj. Y.

Despite the heavy loss, IAF pilots are bound to bounce back to their former selves quickly, said one former pilot, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Most guys are fatalistic about these sorts of things. They have always happened and they are not going to wake up the next morning and say 'Damn. We've got to go fly again. Obviously the pilots in the CH-53 squadron will be dragging their butts for a week or two, but they will get over the loss.'"

And the swagger? "I don't think anyone will hang their heads too low and think less of themselves. It is not in the make-up of pilots who are chosen to be able to handle these sort of things," said the pilot.

Even now, CH-53s are flying troops into Lebanon and will con-

tinued from Page 7

time to do so unless the IDF decides differently.

Still, after something like this, there are sure to be hesitations among infantry about boarding the CH-53.

"The best medicine to cope with this is for us, after a mourning period, is to return to routine and carry out the missions," Maj. Y. said.

"I say [to the infantry] that we have to cope. It is not 'us and them.' I personally feel very very safe flying in helicopters and fly in the Yasur. I know the people. I know many of the pilots.

"As heavy transport helicopters go, there is no alternative. It is an excellent aircraft with excellent pilots. I say now, at these difficult moments, that you can count on us," Maj. Y. said.

"But the situation with high-school pupils is much more problematic. They face the army, and incidents like this can cause anxiety. Ironically, there's always been a drop in motivation to serve in elite units just after a war. It occurred even after the Six Day War, and certainly after the Lebanon war. But after a while, the normal situation recovers, and a balance is achieved." The psychologist doesn't accept claims that soldiers today, many of them equipped with cellular phones to keep in touch with their worried families, are too "spoiled" to be fighters. "Many of the parents have been in the army and know what it's like. Tens of thousands of parents were beside themselves when they learned of the crash. It's a positive thing that the IDF opened all the phone lines for them to call home."

Children can be helped to deal with their fears not only by talking, but also by drawing pictures and playing games, suggests Noy. "You can't force them to express themselves; some are better off internalizing it than letting it out. Teenagers facing the army absorb the country's macho culture. They're reluctant to talk about being afraid."

"Those aiming for elite units are most interested in testing their limits. When something like this week's accident occurs, their ambitions are confused. But there are coping mechanisms: religious beliefs about spiritual values and the afterlife can help some. Others can look at the general dangerousness of daily life: There are commercial airline crashes from time to time, but that doesn't keep you from flying. There are constant road accidents, but you grit your teeth and go because you have to get there. Israelis, adept at facing uncertainty and danger, will have to go on."

COPING

Continued from Page 8

raw material. Aside from the families and inner circle of the victims, whose lives are forever changed, many other people have been affected. They start to doubt themselves. This can include soldiers who do helicopter maintenance, military officers and also government ministers.

"The immediate reaction to catastrophe is pulling together, a feeling of unity. But I predict that it won't last through next week. I don't want to be a prophet of doom, but there will be plenty of finger pointing very soon."

WHETHER ISRAELIS needed an official day of national mourning this week is a subject of controversy. Stores were nearly empty of customers in the wake of the accident, parties and even some wedding celebrations were postponed, and cinemas would have had no customers in the mood to see a film even if the government hadn't instructed them to close. "The families need to feel that society is with them," notes Granot. It's a good thing, but it's difficult to know when a tragedy is "big enough" to require a national day of mourning. There wasn't one when 54 soldiers died in a helicopter crash in Jericho 20 years ago or after the chain of bus bombings last year. I'm glad that I don't have to make such decisions.

It isn't successive disasters that weaken the national will, Granot suggests, "but the growing affluence of the society. It's true that faced by outside threats, those who are better off have more things to defend. But the good life makes you want more of the good life, to view things individualistically rather than to be concerned

with the collective. We've lost our ideology. It's a normal thing. People are less willing to put up with sacrifice than in the past."

Solomon says Israelis don't have to have an official mourning day to be subdued and pained. "It's true that more people are lost from road accidents in less than two months than in the helicopter accident, but the fact that it happened in one moment, solely to young people who are protecting us, that has a great impact. It's a small country, and everyone seems to know somebody who knows somebody who died, even if they weren't themselves connected to the victims. Special attention should be given to people who have suffered personal loss in the past, who are particularly susceptible to the reopening of old wounds when such a disaster occurs."

Noy says that politicians are sometimes out of tune with the feeling in the country. "It was the right thing when political leaders like Binyamin Netanyahu and Ehud Barak and Ephraim Sneh spoke about their emotions. I think Shimon Peres erred when, from Switzerland, he used the occasion to talk about politics and getting out of Lebanon. Maybe it's because he wasn't in Israel and was out of touch, but his words were a mistake and out of place. At such times, leaders should emphasize what unites us rather than what divides us."

EXPLAINING the situation to young children is difficult. "One must use a child's own terms. The child needs to feel in control of his world. You can discuss the fact that some accidents are preventable and some are not. Emphasize that they should be careful crossing the street to avoid an accident and not to play with dangerous things," says Noy.

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Sotheby's probes art smuggling

LONDON (Reuters) - Respected British auctioneers Sotheby's admitted yesterday the law had been broken and said it had suspended senior staff following a report that claimed it had smuggled art treasures from Italy to Britain.

George Bailey, managing director of Sotheby's Europe, said he was very sad about the incident which was reported in an investigative television program.

"The law has been broken in this isolated case," he said, adding that he was not aware of any criminal proceedings.

"I am very sad about this. We have taken the appropriate action and are also keeping the show on the road."

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NATIONAL LEAGUE

England bowlers slice through NZ

WELLINGTON (Reuters) - England bowlers, led by Darren Gough and Andy Caddick, cut through the New Zealand top order on the first day of the second Test, shortened to one session yesterday.

The home side was in deep trouble at 56 for six wickets, with Nathan Astle on 15 and Dipak Patel on five.

Captain Lee Gernon won the toss for New Zealand and chose to bat on a damp and lively pitch freshened by rain which prevented the first two sessions.

The home side reached 14 and then lost five wickets for nine runs in a disastrous 43-ball spell.

New Zealand-born Andy Caddick, recalled after missing Tests on the Zimbabwe leg of the tour, began the rot when Blair Pocock speared a catch to Dominic Cork in the gully.

Next over Bryan Young touched a catch to wicket-keeper Alec Stewart, starting a purple spell for Gough.

He removed three batsmen for two runs in 20 balls.

Adam Parore went in the same way as Young, then Caddick had first Test century maker Stephen Fleming caught and bowled to have the Kiwis 19 for four.

Gough pushed them deeper into the mire when Chris Cairns was caught by Nasser Hussain at third slip playing a loose shot.

Caddick came back for his second spell at the other end where Gernon gave Stewart his third catch.

Caddick had three for 19 and Gough three for 12 at the end of



WATCH OUT - England bowler Andy Caddick cut through the New Zealand top order.

New Zealand, 1st innings:
 B. YOUNG c Stewart b Gough 3
 R. POCKOCK c Cork b Caddick 1
 A. PARORE c Stewart b Gough 4
 S. FLEMING c and b Caddick 1
 N. ASTLE not out 15
 C. CAIRNS c Hussain b Gough 3
 L. GERMON c Stewart b Caddick 10
 D. PATEL not out 5 (50th 2nd)
 TOTAL: 56 for six wickets
 Fall: 14, 18, 23, 26, 31, 37
 Bowling: Darren Gough 11-23-0 (1st), Andy Caddick 11-5-19-3, Darren Gough 8-3-12-3 (1st).
 Overs: 30.

the day.

England captain Mike Atherton must have been much happier with his bowlers than in the first Test when on a similar green wicket New Zealand reached 390 after he sent them in.

This time the bowlers bowled wicket-to-wicket and allowed the

plentiful movement off the seam to do the work.

Atherton has been under pressure this tour. England failed to win the test series in Zimbabwe and lost the one day series there and then allowed New Zealand to escape with a miraculous draw in the Auckland Test when the team

reeling in the second innings.

New Zealand included left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori, who at 18 years 10 days became that country's youngest test player.

England dropped Alan Mullally and Craig White from its first Test team to bring back Caddick and off-spinner Robert Croft.

Maccabi impressive in home win over Berlin

By RICHARD ZAACKS

Maccabi Tel Aviv put on one of its most impressive performances of the season last night, defeating Alba Berlin 78-62 at Yad Eliahu in Euro League action.

The victory, combined with a CSKA Moscow loss to Olympiakos, moves Maccabi a game ahead of the Russians and into one of the top four places to advance to the Final 16, with only two games to play in the final pool.

Maccabi, led by Randy White's 25 points and 10 rebounds, also gained an important tie-breaker advantage over Alba. Its 16-point win overcame the 70-65 loss in Berlin last month.

The victory was especially sweet for Nadav Henefeld, who turned in a brilliant all-around performance after faltering badly in the first game against Berlin with only four points and no rebounds.

Last night, Henefeld was all over the court, with 16 points, three steals and a block. For good measure, he also took three offensive fouls.

Henefeld, who had 13 points in the first half, was particularly spectacular during a six-minute stretch of the period, after Berlin

stormed back from a strong Maccabi opening to cut a 11-point deficit to 15-10.

Henefeld took the game into his own hands, creating five Alba turnovers as Maccabi went on a 19-10 run to boost its lead to 34-20.

Maccabi, which took a 37-26 advantage into the locker room, came out playing well again in the second half to up its lead to 53-38.

But the Israelis suddenly started playing ugly, turning the ball over repeatedly as Berlin took advantage to cut the lead to 62-55 with six minutes remaining in the game.

But then White once again gave Maccabi a boost, hitting a basket on a nice assist from Doron Sheffer, who had 12 of his 14 points in the second period.

After Henefeld drew an offensive foul, Derrick Sharp drilled a three-pointer to make it 67-55 and then hit another bucket from behind the arc to effectively ice the game for Maccabi, with a 72-57 advantage with less than two minutes to play.

Maccabi was particularly impressive in its long-range shooting, hitting 9 of 13 (69 percent) from three-point range, including White with a perfect 3-3.

Former Maccabi Tel Aviv player

Wendell Alexis paced Alba with 16 points, while Sasha Obradovic had 15 and Henrik Rudt 12.

Ironically, the Germans stayed in the game with 86.3% free-throw shooting (19-22), after coming into the contest with a paltry 67.4% success rate from the foul line.

But it was not enough to defeat a determined Maccabi, which had an overall good team effort.

In addition to White's 25 and Henefeld's 16 points, Sheffer had 14 and Derrick Sharp 10. Buck Johnson chipped in with six points and Oded Katash three. Brad Leaf, nursing an injury, was not needed and played only one minute in the first half.

In other Group E action, Olympiakos defeated host CSKA Moscow 79-70 behind 20 points from Dragan Tarlac. Sergei Bazarevich paced CSKA with 20.

In the night's other contest, Gregor Fucika had 21 points to lead Stefanel Milan to a 73-63 victory over visiting Charleroi.

Group E			
Stefanel Milan	11	3	24
Maccabi Tel Aviv	8	6	22
Alba Berlin	8	6	22
Olympiakos	8	6	22
CSKA Moscow	7	7	21
Charleroi	0	14	14

Lewis and McCall: Two approaches to problems

LAS VEGAS (Reuters) - Oliver McCall and Lennox Lewis are two fighters with two approaches to problem solving.

McCall has turned to the Scriptures to help him see the light. Lewis has sought the gospel according to Manny.

There seems, however, to be a lot more riding on McCall's bid for enlightenment. His life.

It's a question whether he will be able to shake the grip drugs has had on his body and his mind for years, not only to win the vacant World Boxing Council (WBC) heavyweight title today against Lewis, but to win a life free of all those drug-induced escapades that have defined him.

McCall, now at least, talks a good game of dealing with his problems.

Valeri Bure and Vincent Damboussie had two assists apiece for the Canadiens, who out-shot Pittsburgh 49-34. Montreal had a three-game unbeaten streak stopped and lost at home to the Penguins for the second time in 10 days.

Lewis turned to Steward after the trainer had guided McCall to his upset second-round victory over Lewis in September 1994, when he knocked him down and goofy with one punch to win the WBC title.

McCall then lost the title to Frank Bruno, who lost to Mike Tyson last March. When Evander Holyfield beat Tyson last November the WBC belt was not on the line but Tyson surrendered his hold on it with the defeat.

The loss to McCall exposed Lewis as a fundamentally-flawed fighter, who might never reach his enormous potential.

But Steward by most accounts seems to be finally tapping into Lewis's talent.

Steward, who engineered Evander Holyfield's upset of Riddick Bowe for the heavyweight title and took Thomas Hearns to four world titles, has improved Lewis's balance, which had made Humpty Dumpty look like Nureyev, and is making strides at turning his pussycat of a pawing jab into a legitimate weapon.

Just as importantly, Steward has worked on Lewis's psyche, getting him to be less cautious, less of a chess player in the ring, and daring to fight in the trenches.

Gretzky's 4 assists help beat Whalers

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The Hartford Whalers tried to get rough with Wayne Gretzky Wednesday, but he made them pay.

Gretzky had four assists, Luc Robitaille had two goals and an assist and Adam Graves scored twice as the Rangers stopped a four-game home winless streak with a 5-2 victory over the slumping Whalers.

"They took some liberties on me tonight, but it's been done to me before," said Gretzky, who has 18 assists in his last 14 games. "There comes a time when you get frustrated, but you just try to channel your energy in a positive way."

"You have to be physical with the Rangers, you can't let them skate freely and at times tonight we gave them too much room," Hartford coach Paul Maurice said. The Rangers improved to 4-3-1

in their last eight games overall and 1-3-1 in their last five at Madison Square Garden.

Brian Leach had the other New York goal while former Ranger Steven Rice and Hnat Domenichelli tallied for Hartford.

Penguins 6, Canadiens 3

Glenn Murray scored two goals in a 3:02 span of the third period and Jaromir Jagr added his league-leading 44th tally.

Despite playing without center Mario Lemieux, who sat out with back spasms one day after becoming the seventh player in NHL history to score 600 goals, the

Penguins improved to 13-2-1 in their last 16 road games. In Lemieux's last visit to Montreal, he scored four goals in the third period.

Petr Nedved added two power-play goals and rookie Patrick Lalime continued to stake his claim to the Calder Trophy, stopping 46 shots. Lalime is 18-2-2 since being called up from the International Hockey League.

Stu Barnes scored Pittsburgh's first goal while Martin Rucinsky, Vladimir Malakhov and Mark Recchi tallied for Montreal.

Valeri Bure and Vincent Damboussie had two assists apiece for the Canadiens, who out-shot Pittsburgh 49-34. Montreal had a three-game unbeaten streak stopped and lost at home to the Penguins for the second time in 10 days.

EASTERN CONFERENCE						
Atlantic Division						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Philadelphia	29	15	8	66	182	127
Florida	25	19	7	63	149	120
N.Y. Rangers	27	21	11	61	189	152
New Jersey	25	17	8	58	133	124
Washington	21	25	6	48	138	141
Tampa Bay	19	28	5	44	139	160
N.Y. Islanders	17	27	8	43	142	156
Northwest Division						
Pittsburgh	30	18	5	65	200	162
Buffalo	27	19	7	61	151	136
Montreal	19	26	10	48	171	195
Hartford	20	24	7	47	148	168
Boston	20	26	6	46	150	179
Ottawa	18	28	10	46	142	151

WESTERN CONFERENCE						
Central Division						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Dallas	30	19	4	64	161	127
Detroit	24	17	10	58	153	116
St. Louis	25	24	5	55	181	188
Phoenix	22	26	4	48	140	183
Chicago	20	28	8	48	137	143
Toronto	20	33	1	41	154	190
Pacific Division						
Colorado	32	13	8	72	182	124
Edmonton	28	22	5	57	169	153
Vancouver	24	28	2	50	165	178
Anaheim	20	27	6	46	151	163
San Jose	20	27	5	45	137	184
Calgary	18	28	8	44	133	159
Los Angeles	19	29	6	44	146	186

Soccer action to include remembrance for 73 fallen

By OPH LEWIS

All local soccer fixtures this weekend will begin with a minute's silence and all players will wear black ribbons to commemorate the 73 dead in Tuesday's helicopter accident in the north.

The heavy sense of loss will make for a subdued weekend of soccer, although the situation in the National League also does not make for extraordinarily exciting stuff in the 17th round of action.

With Betar Jerusalem ruling the league with a seven-point lead, and Hapoel Petah Tikva also certain to retain second spot for at least another week due to a much better goal difference than third-placed Hapoel Beersheba, no major upheavals look to be in the offing.

Beitar travels to Kiryat Eliezer where it faces Hapoel Haifa in the late game tomorrow afternoon, while the other match of interest appears to be in the Negev, where Hapoel Beersheba hosts Maccabi Tel Aviv.

At the bottom of the table, Hapoel Tiba has another crucial fixture against Hapoel Beit

She'an. If hosts Beit She'an inflict another loss on Tiba today, it would seem to make the Arab sector side's task of remaining in the league well-nigh impossible, even at this early stage of the season.

Hapoel Tel Aviv's recovery plans have received a severe blow with the suspension of Alon Hazan for three matches after he swore at referee Ehan Tabrizi in the State Cup tie against Ironi Ashdod two weeks ago. Hapoel hosts Hapoel Kfar Sava in a match which could go either way and Hazan's absence is sure to be felt, making new coach Dror Kashtan's job all the more difficult without the talented international defender.

This weekend's National League fixtures (all matches kick off tomorrow at 15:00 unless otherwise stated):

Maccabi Herzliya v. Zairim Holon, Herzliya, today 14:30; Hapoel Beersheba v. Maccabi Tel Aviv, Beersheba; Hapoel Haifa v. Beitar Jerusalem, Kiryat Eliezer 17:45; Maccabi Petah Tikva v. Ironi Ashdod, Petah Tikva; Hapoel Beit She'an v. Hapoel Tiba, Beit She'an, today 14:30; Ironi Rishon LeZion v. Hapoel Petah Tikva, Rishon LeZion; Hapoel Jerusalem v. Maccabi Haifa, Teddy Stadium; Hapoel Tel Aviv v. Hapoel Kfar Sava, Bloomfield.

England national squad hobbled by injuries

LONDON (AP) - Paul Gascoigne watched his England colleagues train yesterday. He also jugged a little.

But the former Lazio midfielder, who was in plaster after he suffered an ankle injury in a six-a-side competition last week, still looked a very doubtful starter for England's World Cup qualifying game against Italy Wednesday.

Reports from his club in Scotland suggested Gascoigne had no chance of playing and England coach Glenn Hoddle called Liverpool midfielder Jamie Redknapp into the squad. But Hoddle said that Gascoigne would remain with the team.

"He is still a doubt for the game, sure, because he's only just come out of plaster and we need to assess that over the coming days," the coach said.

"But I had a good 20-minute chat with him this morning and he was fine, in many ways excellent." After he suffered the injury playing for Glasgow Rangers in the six-a-side competition Amsterdam, Gascoigne went to hospital for x-rays and had the joint put in plaster.

Gascoigne is only one of Hoddle's injury worries.

Striker Alan Shearer, named by Hoddle as captain for the game against Italy, has a back problem, Inter Milan midfielder Paul Ince has a groin strain, defender Tony Adams an ankle knock and goalkeeper David Seaman a knee problem.

"It really is frustrating," Hoddle said. "I have waited three months for this game and then you end up with this scenario." England is already without Spurs forwards Teddy Sheringham and Darren Anderton and Everton leftback Andy Hincliffe, all of whom probably would have faced the Italians.

Shaq-less Lakers beat Bulls, 106-90

INGLEWOOD - The Los Angeles Lakers, without Shaquille O'Neal, beat Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls.

Elden Campbell, playing center in place of the injured O'Neal, responded with a career-high 34 points as the Lakers snapped the Bulls' eight-game winning streak 106-90 in a battle of division leaders.

Campbell grabbed 14 rebounds and Nick Van Exel had 24 points, 13 assists and eight rebounds for Los Angeles, which won for the seventh time in eight games and increased its Pacific Division lead to 2 1/2 games over Seattle.

"First of all, I was getting the ball everywhere down the court," Campbell said. "They were trying to play me one-on-one. Any decent post player in the league, if you play him one-on-one, is going to get a lot of good looks and he's going to score." Eddie Jones scored 18 points and Robert Horry added 15, seven rebounds and three blocks for the Lakers, who improved to 21-4 at home.

O'Neal, the league's third-leading scorer and fourth-leading rebounder, will miss at least the next week, including Sunday's All-Star Game, due to a knee sprain.

"The big key to the game was that the guys played the Laker game as if Shaq was there," Lakers coach Del Harris said.

Jordan scored 27 points and Scottie Pippen added 22 and nine assists for Chicago, which still owns the league's best record at 42-6 and the league's best road mark at 21-5.

The Bulls completed their six-game road trip at 5-1.

"Elden Campbell came in and we couldn't stop him," said Jordan.

Chicago finished 9-2 without suspended forward Dennis Rodman, who will return following the All-Star break from his suspension for kicking a television

cameraman.

The Bulls, who beat the Lakers in overtime at home in December, had won the last three meetings. The 16-point loss matched the worst of the season for Chicago.

Jazz 99, SuperSonics 95

Karl Malone scored 26 points, including eight in the final 4:03.

The visiting Jazz, who lost a seven-game series to the Sonics in the Western Conference finals last season, improved to 3-0 against the Sonics this season.

Shaun Kemp led Seattle with 23 points.

76ers 113, Spurs 97

Allen Iverson scored 25 points as the hot-shooting Philadelphia 76ers won.

Jerry Stackhouse added 22 points, Don MacLean 21 and Rex Walters 17 for the hot 76ers, who shot 59 percent from the field.

San Antonio, which has lost five in a row, was led by Vernon Maxwell's 19 points.

Raptors 89, Cavaliers 84

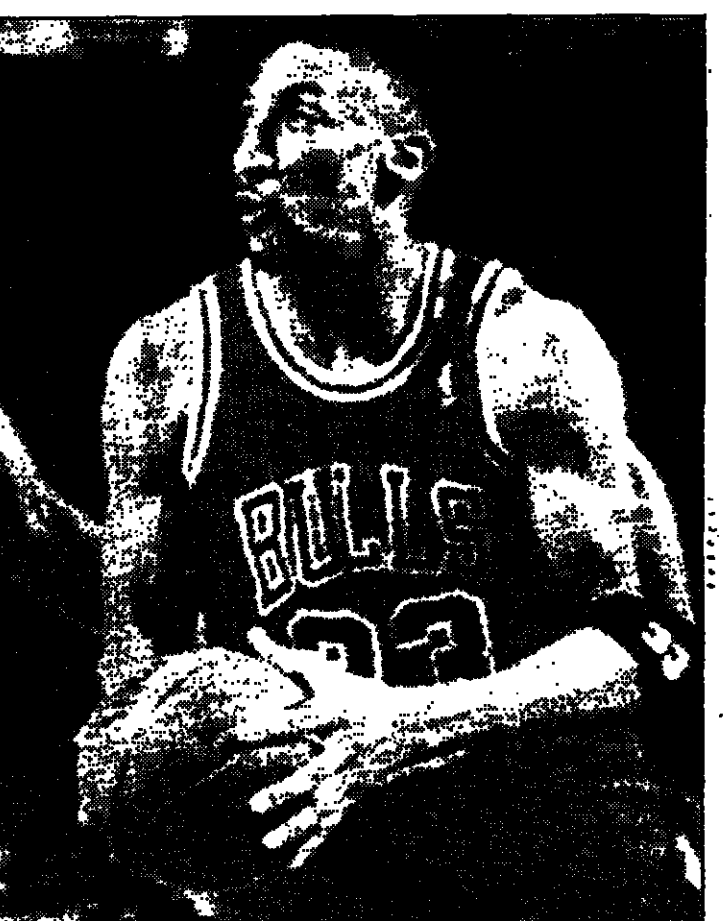
Walt Williams scored 26 points and Clifford Rozier added 19, including six points in the final one-and-a-half minutes.

Rozier also had nine rebounds and six blocks, including a fourth-quarter rejection on Bobby Sura that turned the momentum in Toronto's favor. Damon Stoudamire had 19 points and 10 assists for the Raptors.

Suns 99, Hawks 81

Cedric Ceballos scored four of his 19 points during a 16-0 second-period run that helped host Phoenix win.

Wesley Person added 18 points for the Suns, while Kevin Johnson finished with 14 points, 13 assists and eight rebounds. (Reuters, AP)



OFF NIGHT - Scottie Pippen scored 22 points, but the court belonged to the Lakers.

WESTERN CONFERENCE					EASTERN CONFERENCE				
Midwest Division					Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB		W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	33	14	.702	-	Miami	25	12	.675	-
Houston	32	15	.681	1	New York	33	14	.702	2
Minnesota	22	25	.468	11	Orlando	23	20	.536	10
Dallas	16	32	.333	17 1/2	Washington	28	25	.488	13
Denver	16	32	.333	17 1/2	New Jersey	13	32	.289	21
San Antonio	11	33	.250	20 1/2	Philadelphia	12	34	.261	22 1/2
Vancouver	9	41	.180	25 1/2	Boston	11	34	.244	23
Pacific Division					Central Division				
L.A. Lakers	35	13	.729	-	Chicago	42	8	.875	-
Seattle	32	15	.681	2 1/2	Detroit	33	12	.733	7 1/2
Portland	25	23	.521	10	Atlanta	31	15	.674	10
Sacramento	21	27	.438	14	Charlotte	28	19	.595	13
Phoenix 99, Atlanta 81					Cleveland	25	22	.529	16 1/2
Detroit 106, Washington 84					Indiana	22	23	.488	18 1/2
L.A. Lakers 106, Chicago 90					Golden State	21	25	.457	20
					Toronto	17	29	.370	24

NATIONAL LEAGUE									
	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Diff.	Pts	
Beitar Jerusalem	16	14	2	0	36	8	28	44	
Hapoel Petah Tikva	16	11	4	1	34	17	17	37	
Hapoel Beersheba	18	11	3	4	25	13	12	34	
Maccabi Petah Tikva	18	7	3	5	21	17	4	27	
Maccabi Tel Aviv	18	7	5	4	22	18	4	26	
Beitar Jerusalem	16	7	5	4	18	17	1	28	
Beitar Jerusalem	16	7	2	7	22	19	3	23	
Hapoel Haifa	16	5	7	4	18	16	2	22	
Maccabi Haifa	16	5	7	4	18	16	2	21	
Hapoel Kfar Sava	16	6	3	7	18	19	-1	21	
Ironi Rishon LeZion	16	5	7	4	18	29	-13	17	
Hapoel Jerusalem	16	5	2	9	16	26	-10	16	
Zairim Holon	16	3	6	7	12	17	-5	15	
Hapoel Tel Aviv	16	3	4	9	10	18	-8	14	
Hapoel Beit She'an	16	3	4	9	10	18	-8	13	
Maccabi Herzliya	16	4	1	11	8	17	-9	13	
Hapoel Tiba	16	3	1	12	12	31	-19	10	

5 killed in van-truck collision

Five men were killed and five injured yesterday when their van apparently skidded on a patch of ice and collided head-on with a garbage truck in the Arab village of El-Jib north of Jerusalem. In two other accidents, two children were killed after being run over.

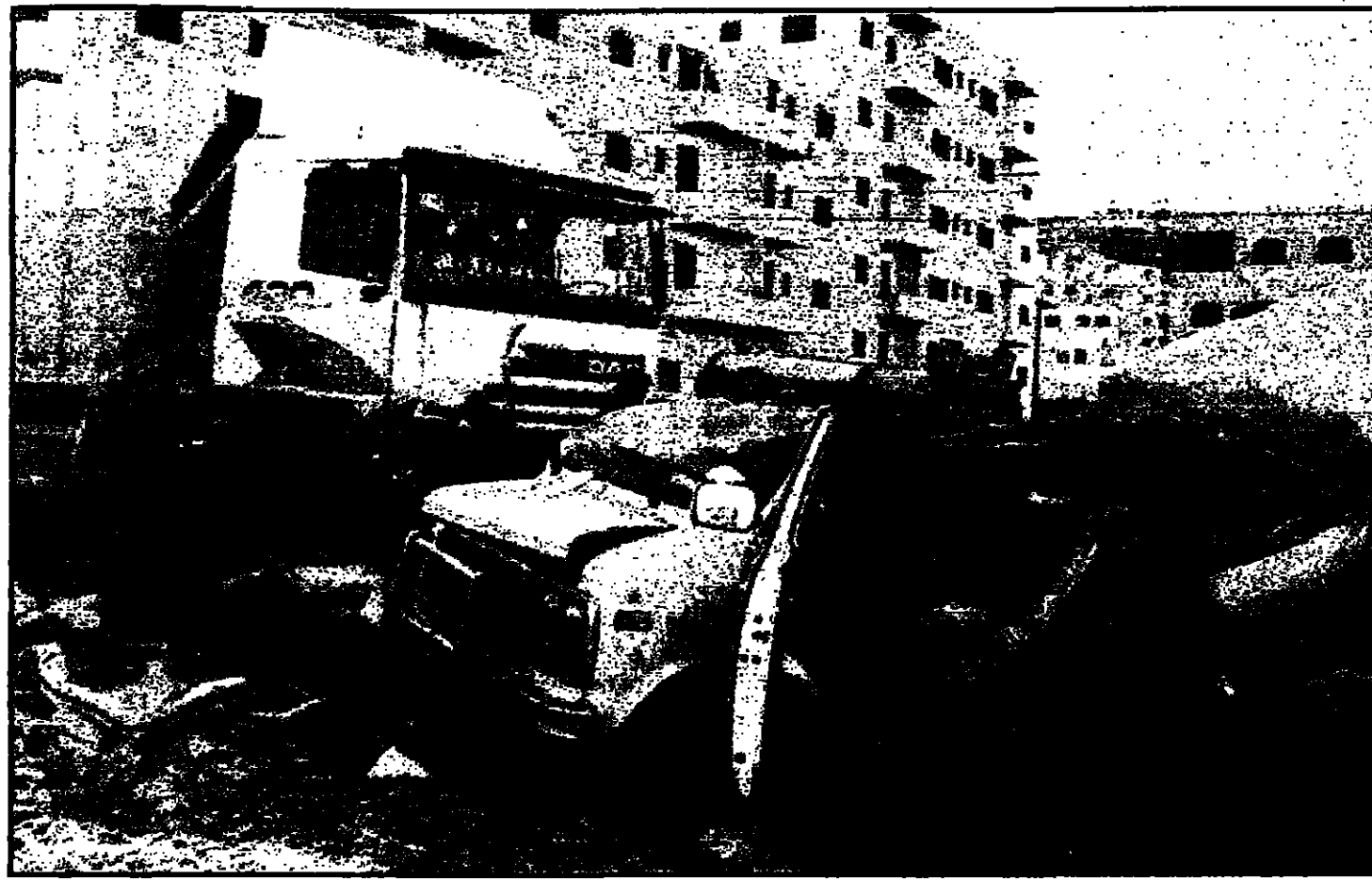
Four workers riding in a van on their way from the coast to the Atarot industrial zone were killed outright in the crash; a fifth died in hospital. Another three workers in the van were injured and two more persons were hurt when their vehicle crashed into the others.

Those killed were Moshe Klein and Haim Murdoch, both of Bnei Brak, Ezra Navon of Kiryat Ono, Meir Aslan of Kiryat Ono, and Baruch Bar-Shalom of Givat Shmuel.

After an initial investigation, Judea and Samaria district Police spokesman Boaz Goldberg said it appeared that the workers' van had skidded on a patch of ice, causing it to crash into the garbage truck.

Rescue units rushed to the scene and extracted the dead and injured workers from their van, which was torn apart by the impact. The injured were taken to Hadassah-University Hospital at Ein Kerem. The road, which connects Atarot to Givat Ze'ev, was briefly blocked in both directions by the collision.

The hospital announced yesterday that two of the injured had undergone surgery, and a third would be operated on. One person remained in critical condition, another was listed as serious, two



Police officers inspect part of the wreckage of a van that skidded into this garbage truck yesterday at El-Jib near Jerusalem, killing five. (Brian Hendler)

satisfactory, and one in good condition.

In another road accident yesterday, a Shfaram resident ran over and fatally injured his two-year-

old daughter while backing up his car. Rania Anbarawi was rushed to Haifa's Rambam Hospital, where she died of her injuries several hours later. Police questioned her

father and then released him. Last night a 13-year-old Jerusalem boy was fatally injured when a truck backed over him on the city's Sderot Agnon. He was

taken by ambulance to Hadassah-University Hospital at Ein Kerem, where he died shortly afterward. Police detained the truck driver for questioning. (Itim)

Inmate killed in fight at Ayalon Prison

A fight between two prisoners at Ayalon Prison yesterday ended with the death of Omar Faraj, 32, of Jerusalem, and with Amir Faras in fair condition at Assaf Harofeh Hospital in Tzrifin suffering from stab wounds to his chest.

The men, who both were serving life sentences, got into an argument at around noon in the prisoners' lounge. They pulled out sharp objects, apparently improvised knives, and began brawling. The other prisoners didn't interfere, and by the time guards arrived, Faraj was lying on the ground in a pool of blood.

The men were rushed to Assaf Harofeh and Faraj died an hour later. Faras remained in the hospital last night, under heavy security.

Ramle police are investigating the incident and how the prisoners obtained weapons.

Faraj was serving a life sentence for murdering policeman Avi Barazi and for later setting off an improvised bomb in Shata Prison, which blinded one prisoner and injured several others. Faras also is serving a life sentence for murder. (Itim)

Deri questioned again in Bar-On affair



By RAINE MARCUS

MK Aryeh Deri (Shas) was summoned for questioning for a second time in the alleged "Bar-On for Hebron" deal. Deri, who gave evidence earlier this week, was questioned yesterday regarding the allegations broadcast by Channel 1's Ayala Hasson on the *Mabat* news program.

Although Deri was not questioned under caution, his evidence may be used to further the investigation if necessary. He signed an affidavit before being interviewed.

Meanwhile, sources said that so far there is no substantial evidence showing that there was any type of deal made between the government and Shas in which Roni Bar-On would be appointed attorney-general in exchange for Shas' support on the Hebron agreement, or that Bar-On had promised Deri a plea bargain in return for his appointment.

Hasson's story, which rocked the country and could have toppled the government, seems to be lacking a firm foundation, a source said.

However, police still are investigating other criminal allegations which arose after Hasson's broadcast on the "Bar-On for Hebron" deal.

Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi, who was in favor of the Bar-On appointment, completed giving evidence in his Jerusalem office yesterday. He first gave evidence earlier this week.

So far police have interviewed 15 people, including lawyers and MKs, and expect to question additional parties. Police sources said that the investigating team would have a clearer picture in around a week's time.

On Wednesday afternoon, police, headed by Cmdr. Sando Mazar, met with State Attorney Edna Arbel to update her on the probe.



MK Aryeh Deri talks to reporters outside police fraud squad headquarters in Jaffa yesterday. (Gideon Markowicz)

Danny, Ruti Nahmani agree to mediation for surrogacy procedure

By EVELYN GORDON

Danny and Ruti Nahmani agreed yesterday to court-sponsored mediation in their ongoing battle over Ruti's use of eggs fertilized by Danny to have a baby.

Ruti is unable to carry a child herself because her womb was destroyed by cancer. In 1988, she and Danny decided to have a child using a surrogate, which was illegal at the time. By the time they won permission in the courts to use a surrogate overseas, however, the marriage had collapsed, and Danny had moved in with another woman, with whom he now has two children. Danny then sued to prevent Ruti from implanting eggs he had fertilized, saying he did not want to father her children. After years of court battles, the Supreme Court finally ruled last year, 7-4, that Ruti had a right to use the eggs.

In the meantime, the Knesset passed a law making surrogacy legal in Israel, so Ruti decided not to go abroad for her surrogacy. However, Danny then sued again, arguing that under the new law, surrogacy was legal only with the consent of both parents. The Haifa District Court rejected this suit, saying the Supreme Court had already ruled that Danny could not revoke the consent he originally gave in 1988, and Danny then appealed to the Supreme Court. At the same time, however, the two sides began negotiating to see if they could reach an agreement.

At a hearing yesterday, Deputy Supreme Court President Shlomo Levine suggested that they continue these efforts via mediation, using a retired judge appointed by the court as a medi-

ator. The couple agreed to this.

The disputes between the two involve both financial and other claims. For instance, Danny wants the right to be involved in the choice of a surrogate and to be able to limit the number of children Ruti can have with the fertilized eggs. Both sides bitterly accused the other after the hearing of having been the main stumbling block to an agreement.

"All the property I've already agreed to give to Ruti - all the tens of thousands of shekels she stole from my bank account," said Danny. "But after the court forced me against my will to be a father... I feel an obligation to be a partner in the process. That's how I understand parenthood."

"We have been trying to reach a conclusion, but there are constantly attacks from the other side," complained Ruti, who added that she is negotiating with three potential Israeli surrogates, and hopes to sign a contract as soon as she and Danny reach an agreement. The surrogacy will cost \$20,000-\$25,000, she said.

Ruti's attorney, Ziv Gruber, charged that there was "something very inhumane" about Danny coming to court with his two new children as if to flaunt them at Ruti while he is doing everything possible to prevent her from having children of her own.

Danny also came to court with a group of female supporters calling themselves "Women for Danny Nahmani," who explained that just as they would not want to be forced to have children against their will, they did not think men should be forced to, either.

Mandela: South Africa will sell weapons to Syria

South Africa will disregard threats of sanctions and sell weapons to Syria, South African President Nelson Mandela said in an interview published this week.

"Listen to what I say: If the Syrians are satisfied with quality of South Africa's technology, we will sell them the weapons they request, and we will not take into account any kind of threats," Mandela was quoted as saying in the Arabic *Al-Hayat* newspaper. The interview was conducted while Mandela was attending the world economic conference in Davos, Switzerland.

There are Western companies which are selling weapons to the Syrians and they are not subject to any sanctions, he said. "If the US or Britain would decide to sell weapons to the Syrians, would someone imagine the possibility of sanctions?" he asked. The US has hinted that it might halt aid to Pretoria if it sells weapons to Syria, which it accuses of supporting international terror.

Next week, South Africa is expected to decide whether to go ahead with a \$640 million weapons deal with Syria. (Itim)

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French defense minister due here

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

French Defense Minister Charles Millon is due to visit here next week as the official guest of his counterpart Yitzhak Mordechai. It will be Millon's first visit to Israel and he is to be received with full military honors.

He is to meet with President Ezer Weizman and lay a wreath at the grave of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin. Senior French defense officials and French army brass are to accompany Millon and they will visit with the IDF, the air force and military industries in the country.

The aim of the visit is to expand relations between the defense establishments of the two countries, which defense officials describe as "good."

On Sunday, prior to Millon's visit, the Defense Ministry will receive Sweden's deputy Defense Minister Lars Rokke. Since Mordechai took over at the Defense Ministry, he has hosted his counterparts from Germany, Poland and Ecuador.

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